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[RUTH'S CONSOLATION.]

ELLEN LAMBERT'S TWENTY YEARS.

By M. T. CALDOR.

CHAPTER XII.

Still so hardhearted? What may be
The sin I have committed?
That now the angry deity
Has to a rock concealed thee,
And thus thy hardness fitted.

MISS DAVENAL came promptly to renew her acquaintance with the Claxtons, and brought a box of handkerchiefs for Nina's dexterous embroidery needle. She assumed such a familiar, friendly manner, none of them were able to comprehend that she was still a comparative stranger. Neither could any one of the family be vexed or humiliated by the obligation, when presently, in her gay and careless way, she produced from her capacious travelling bag a dozen little articles of luxurious comfort, and placed them here and there in the most unconcerned matter-of-fact manner. Even proud-spirited, envious Bella had not a demurring word when their wealthy young visitor threw over her shoulders a lovely riding cape of deep blue, bordered with swan's down, exclaiming merrily:

"There! don't blame me for giving that to you. A stupid dressmaker made it without my orders. You can imagine what a fright it makes of me, but upon you, fair Miss Bell, it will be lovely! There is a French hat, trimmed with harebells which belongs to it, and I shall bring it to-morrow, when I come to take this darling little woman to drive out with me."

"Me? oh, Miss Davenal! you don't mean that you will take me out," exclaimed Mrs. Claxton, clasping those delicate hands of hers in very ecstasy of anticipation.

"And why not, I pray you, when the sunshine is warm and bright, but not overpowering? And you are to try this cordial to-day in order to prepare

yourself for the extra exertion. I am already anticipating it will be the very pleasantest of all my rides in this town. Bella is going, of course, and little Nina, and Master Nolan only escapes because that poor ankle keeps him to the couch."

"You are so good!" whispered Nina, who was already at work, marking out her patterns.

Miss Davenal turned towards her impetuously.

"Child, child, I am not worthy to touch the hem of your garment. Patient, unselfish little worker, do you think my indolent distribution of superfluities will pass for goodness, in the sight of your devotion? Do not shame me by the contrast!" And Miss Davenal did not offer the swan's down hood and cloak to Nina. She had a keener understanding of the differing natures of these two sisters. But when Nina went out where she kept her thin, faded shawl; hanging ready for its constant use, she found a warm, serviceable, and neat-looking cloak hanging in its place, with a fresh pair of gloves in the pocket, a pretty scarf around it, and the carefully tied parcel beneath proved to be the very pair of new boots which Nina had anxiously foreseen must eventually be forthcoming, but had dimly queried how it was possible they should be obtained, without depriving the family of some needed comfort. Now the feet, which in Nolan's illness must do all the running to and fro from town, were neatly shod.

Nina's tearful glance of gratitude was Miss Davenal's sweetest remembrance for the day. Nevertheless when the pretty pony carriage arrived, Nina shook her head. "You are so good, Miss Davenal. I shall never be able to thank you enough for this treat you are giving dear mamma and poor Bella. But it will be too much to have another, and if you please, I'm so interested in this letter I must finish it to-day, and won't you excuse me?"

Miss Davenal was very ready to refuse in the most tyrannical fashion. She had determined that this little self-sacrificing creature should have one treat, despite her persistent devotion. She had in reality planned the ride for Nina's sake, quite as much as for her mother's, and to have the helpless beauty

occupy the spare seat alone, and Nina remain at home still toiling, was beyond Miss Davenal's power of endurance.

"Now, Nina," said she, "I am a despot in my way, as you ought to have discovered before this. I want you on the seat by me, and there is room for Bella and your mother on the other."

"But, if you please," pleaded Nina, "I would rather stay at home. Poor Nolan is so downhearted, he will mope away all the time we are gone, and it retards him so much. Besides, it is such a nice opportunity for us to have a quiet conversation, such as we have longed for, but dared not venture upon, because mamma has such sharp eyes, and we would not have her guess, yet, something that Nolan and I are troubled about. Please let me stay."

"Little martyr!" sighed Miss Davenal, as she allowed her to have her way, "and yet how I envy her!"

It was a pretty sight—the glittering equipage and graceful horses, with the sweet, aristocratic looking invalid, her face flushed with the glow of excited enjoyment, leaning back among the velvet cushions, and those two beautiful girls, so different, and yet equally peerless in their own style, blooming there in front of her. The dull townspeople roused themselves to gaze, admire, and wonder, most of all. It was an event indeed to see the Claxtons once more in a handsome carriage. People asked each other in significant whispers if Madame Lambert was asleep, and her spires all dispersed? And it so chanced that the circle of spectators was accidentally enlarged. When Dixon drove down the street, across which the track of the railroad extended, he found the passage momentarily obstructed by the stoppage of one of the long trains. A carriage had broken, and the engineer was securing it against farther accident. So the annoyed and wearied passengers had this agreeable addition to their otherwise tame and commonplace view. They saw the pony carriage, the horses stamping and pawing, the three ladies smiling and talking merrily.

"By Jove! you don't often see two such stylish



"*beauties,*" exclaimed a young gentleman, one of four in the rear rail-carriage close beside the street. "Look, Lefton, there's a blonde and brunette for you. Which can carry off the palm?"

The young man addressed had been looking forth eagerly. He started up, knocked hastily on the window as the guard passed without, and asked:

"How many minutes shall we remain stationary? I have discovered an acquaintance in yonder phæton, and wish to speak with her. Open the door for me."

An instant after he was at the door of Miss Davenal's carriage, his hat in his hand, bowing and smiling.

"My good angel caused this accident to hinder the train," exclaimed he. "Miss Davenal, I am delighted to solve the riddle which has so puzzled the fashionable world, as to where its most shining light had vanished. I shall never cease to bless my old aunt, who sent for me, for the seventy-seventh time, to assure me that unless I behaved myself with due regard to her notions, I should be cut short in her will. Now I know where to look for you. I need not ask if you are well, for I herewith declare I never saw you appear in such good health and spirits, nor so thoroughly charming."

How gay and bright, how aristocratic he looked, standing there so much at ease, his handsome face aglow with pleasure and surprise! Miss Claxton looked with eager curiosity into her companion's face, to read for herself how the young gentleman stood in that lady's regard.

Miss Davenal's colour rose slightly, just enough for the little exhilaration of the surprise, but her eyes shone bright and clear, and she reached out her hand with a frank, genial smile.

"My dear Lord Windermere, one would as soon expect to see Windsor Castle transported to this quiet little town. I think you give one the same impression which Selkirk might have received, had some stray waif of civilization drifted down upon him, instead of that queer savage. What is the latest scene shifted out by the great kaleidoscope? I have heard no single whisper since I left London. I have purposely shut my eyes to the daily journals. Don't disturb my happy peace and serenity by any of the disagreeable rumours; but if you have any pleasant news, let me hear it."

The gentleman shrugged his shoulders, and made a comical grimace.

"Miss Blanche Adair has really a nibble; I think there is little question but she will secure her prey. Major John Osborne is the expected-to-be-happy man. I haven't offered my condolences yet."

"I hope she will be happy," answered Miss Davenal, thoughtfully; "and the best wish I have for them is, that no remembrance of their unkindness to a desolate girl may stab their satisfaction in their own prosperity. What more?"

He smiled rather roguishly.

"Colonel Fotheringham has also thrust himself, with his usual bravado, into danger, and surrendered to a generous foe. The net which entangled his soldierly feet was a silken one. Can you guess what fair hands spread it? It was one of your old acquaintances who consoled him for your coldness."

"Rose Ingelow, I hope," she returned, eagerly. "Ah, that is good news indeed," she added, as he nodded his affirmation. "He has been such a fearless friend to me, in some dark days of mine, I ought indeed to be thankful for his happy hopes. But stay, this is unpardonable, I have not introduced you to my friends. Dear Mrs. Claxton, this is Lord Ernest Windermere. Miss Bella Claxton, your lordship—I only wish there was more time for you to increase the chance acquaintance."

"In which I most sincerely join you," responded his lordship with such an admiring earnestness in his dark eyes, as he bowed again over Bella's fair hand, that the latter coloured with gratified vanity, and mentally congratulated herself upon her new acquisitions, the blue and ermine mantle, and the French hat, with those lovely harebells, whose exquisite blue matched so charmingly with her eyes.

"I have half a mind to let them go on without me," said his lordship, pulling out his repeater, and glancing disconsolately towards the train, which showed signs of speedy movement. "If——you would invite me, Miss Davenal."

She laughed merrily, and glanced somewhat roguishly into his face.

"Does Lord Windermere consent to waste two hours of London for the sake of a drive in this little country nook? I think there is another through train, two hours later. If you will take a ride with us, I will see that you return hither, in time for the next train."

There was no hesitation in his lordship's manner. He went hurriedly to the window of the railway-carriage he had left.

"Lefton, I'm going to stop until the later train.

Tell them so, if any of the people from the Hall are down after me."

"I say, Windermere, don't be selfish! invite me to share your voluntary detention!" was the gay response.

His lordship shook his head.

"Two such houris, 'pon my honour, it's cruel in you to monopolize both. Give us a chance likewise, added another of his wild young friends.

Lord Windermere hurried away, to escape their badinage, and in a moment more the train was whizzing off, and the road was free for Dixon to proceed.

Miss Davenal quietly transferred herself to the seat by Mrs. Claxton, and left his lordship to establish himself by Bella's side.

"A very cosy party, I am sure," observed Miss Davenal, "is not often my little carriage is so honoured. Now, Mrs. Claxton, you shall tell us where to go. We are to take just the route which you desire."

"It matters very little. Any will seem delightful to such a recluse as I have been," replied that lady, with a smile; yet there was a tinge of sadness in the tone, and turning her face a little farther from their observation, she fell into a reverie which Miss Davenal took care not to disturb.

She returned to her conversation with his lordship, after giving Dixon the required directions, and presently, through the latter's dexterous management, Bella Claxton was also joining in. Bella had listened, like one in some entranced dream, while her companions were recalling merry reminiscences of brilliant festivals, of famous works of art, of levees where they had met distinguished and high-born guests, and her glowing face, and eager, dilated eyes were not lost upon his lordship.

"We are monopolizing all the conversation," he said, with a merry smile. "I am sure by your looks that you can tell us something far more interesting than our dull anecdotes. Pray let us hear it, Miss Claxton."

"Dull!" echoed Bella, quite startled from her accustomed dreamy languor, "I have been listening with wrapt attention, thinking myself fortunate to catch even such distant echoes, from a fairy world, of which I only hear descriptions, but see for myself—nothing!"

"Indeed, that world is the loser for your absence, Miss Claxton: I hope your seclusion is not arbitrary. Let me see you, I beg, with Miss Davenal, when the London season begins. It will be like a white rose and a red one, set side by side, each adding by contrast to the other's charm. I will venture to affirm that you will reign jointly in unrivalled fashion, and I promise to remain a loyal subject at either throne."

As he spoke, he turned his eye from one to the other. Bella Claxton's statuesque face was beautified anew by a soft glow of eager delight, her blue eyes shone resplendently at the very thought, a glad, eager smile was on her lips. Oh, what a glorious prospect the very idea opened upon her! She knew it was the world where she could reign regally, the sphere for which her luxury-loving nature fitted her, the only place in which she could live worthily. For the moment, her dazzled imagination carried her away from the dreary reality. She looked up into his face, the rosy lips parted with a child's ecstatic smile.

"Oh, I shall be so happy, if it can be!" she murmured.

Miss Davenal, on the contrary, tossed her head, and a scornful smile flitting across the proud, dark face lost itself in the dreamy sadness of the great black eye.

"Your lordship cannot tempt me, with such gilded fruit," said she. "I have tried it and found out its bitterness. My nature demands better nourishment, a healthier atmosphere. I think genuine work would be the best thing the world could offer me. It is odd how all things get jangled in this queer world of ours."

"Do you blame me?" questioned Bella, with a wistful reproach in her tone, looking around as suddenly as it was possible for one of her stately, languid temperament to move.

"Blame you?" repeated Miss Davenal, sorrowfully. "I should as soon think of blaming the sun for shining, a flower for blooming. It is perfectly natural in you. Your nature requires just that glittering, sunny life, you would be its star and ornament, its worthy queen; anywhere else your life will be a failure. And for me—such an opportunity as your sister enjoys and improves faithfully, well, I think it would simply be my salvation."

She sighed and looked away dreamily, then added, in a softer voice:

"It is as I said before, in this strange world of ours, fortunes are strangely jangled."

"Yours need not be, did you not so wilfully insist

upon it," retorted Lord Windermere, with the reproof of some old resentment in his voice.

Miss Davenal withdrew her eyes from the sky and fixed them archly on his face, which reddened slightly beneath the intense gaze.

"Your lordship will one day discover that I have the gift of second sight. If I make so poor a speculation of my personal venture, I am better skilled for my friends. One day you will be glad that I refused to allow you to take an insignificant pebble, and call it a diamond, because there happened to be a little sparkle of quartz which caught your eye. The true diamond will some time or other come to your hand, and you will know that it is just the one gem you need, to adorn your life, and make its happiness. And perhaps the pebble likewise will be washed onward—onward, until it finds its true place."

She was smiling softly as she finished the sentence.

"I am glad, at least, that one of the roses will bloom for London," said Lord Windermere, turning to Bella Claxton, with that flattering, deferential air of hers.

And now Bella remembered the pinched purse of the luckless Claxtons, the straitened home. For a moment she had allowed herself to be beguiled by the unwonted surroundings, to forget that ermine mantles, luxurios coaches, and titled companions were not her rightful dower. She drew one long, shuddering sigh.

"Alas!" exclaimed she, "I am afraid it cannot be, unless—unless—Madame Lambert fails of her twenty years."

Mrs. Claxton roused from her reverie at that name, and looked around with an air of frightened bewilderment.

"Madame Lambert! My dear child, what do you mean? Are we likely to meet her?"

"I hope not, I am sure," replied Bella, sinking back into her usual graceful languor, "else Miss Davenal and Lord Windermere will both provoke her hatred, though, heaven be praised, they are above the reach of her malice!"

And then a sudden whim occurred to Bella, and she whispered to Miss Davenal eagerly, pointing with her hand towards the designated street.

"Let us cross by that street to the river-road."

And Dixon, obeying his mistress's gesture, drove that way, and presently little Mrs. Claxton straightened up in her seat, her eyes glittering, her lips notwithstanding all their tremour compressed stormily, and she looked out with nervous eagerness and fascination for the first glimpse of the battlemented roof and tower of Greyslope.

"Ah!" was all she said, as they came abreast of it, and the grand old gloomy house loomed up before them.

But Bella flung out her hand with a proud gesture. "See, my lord," said she, "there is the house to which my mother ought to be able to invite you. It is the home of our ancestors. It will be ours again, if we live long enough. It was my grandmother's right, but her stepmother held the life lease of it by her father's will, and she died, and it is possible we may all die before it comes back to its rightful owners."

Miss Davenal was as ignorant as Lord Windermere, but they both saw the excitement flashing in his face, and read the uncontrollable agitation of her mother by the clasped hands and set, white face. To complete the scene, Madame Lambert, in her stately, old-fashioned coach, with the windows up, came slowly down the avenue. Dixon, who had drawn up the horses, to allow a good view of the fine old building, wheeled his carriage out of the way, but in such a manner that the inmates almost confronted the single occupant of the coach.

Madame Lambert's expression, for the moment, was that of gratified pride. She always enjoyed the admiration which strangers invariably lavished upon Greyslope. She reached up her ungloved hand, and allowed the sunlight to tangle coruscating rainbows in the splendid gems which decked her rings, but in the very act she paused, and the skinny hand remained poised, while a livid hue poured over her face, and she looked into Miss Davenal's carriage. Her fierce black eye darted from Mrs. Claxton's deathly white face to the angry haughtiness of Bella's erect head, and recognized their identity, and then slowly the hand was brought down, the fingers clenched, and Madame Lambert glared menacingly towards the hated relatives.

"Good heavens! what ails the woman?" exclaimed Lord Windermere, in an indignant voice. "Is she a maniac?"

Madame Lambert heard, and her anger became more furious; her eyes seemed fairly to blaze as they darted fiercely from one to another, and with an imperious gesture she commanded the coachman to halt. Just, however, as he drew up the horses, Miss Davenal, half rising in her seat, indignantly

directed Dixon to proceed, commanding him to turn around and retreat, if the strange woman persisted in blocking up their onward progress.

Now, for the first time apparently, Madame Lambert gave her attention to this young lady, and the effect was singular and startling. The flush of anger died off, the strange eyes looked wilder than ever, the lips parted as if gasping for breath, and a strong shudder ran through her frame; and there she sat, staring in ghastly rigidity, as if suddenly frozen into a statue, unable to withdraw her eyes, or make a single movement. Their carriage circling about, left the other still motionless, with that upright figure and ghastly face staring after them. Dixon snapped his whip, and the spirited horses dashed on, and Greyslope and Madame Lambert vanished from their vision.

Bella Claxton drew herself up with a little nervous laugh.

"You must think this is a very strange affair, Lord Windermere. I am afraid you will repent your kindness to us, Miss Davenal," said she, in a tone which showed her nervousness, because it was hurried, and fluttered out of its accustomed dreamy calmness. "Mamma, dear, if you do not mind, I am going to tell them the story."

Mrs. Claxton only nodded a mute consent. Her face was very pale, and the closed eyes could not restrain the slow tears from slipping through the lashes. But she evidently wished to remain undisturbed by any expression of regard or sympathy, and turned her face as far as possible from observation. Had Nina been there, she would have found a dozen noiseless ways of comforting her, without attracting attention, have slipped her little hand into her mother's, whispered words which would have speedily wrought the desired consolation. But Bella was full of her own indignation, her cheek glowed, her eyes shone brilliantly, and, as far as was possible for her calm temperament, she was fired with passionate anger.

The young nobleman was asking himself how it was possible the praise of so lovely a creature had not been sounded over the whole kingdom.

"Let us hear the story, by all means," observed Miss Davenal, hastily; "anything to disperse the gloom which that frightful woman has left behind her. Her eye seems to have pierced me through."

"It was Madame Lambert," said Bella, recovering her calmness, and gaining still brighter colour beneath the young nobleman's respectful, but evident admiration; "and she was my grandmother's stepmother. I don't wonder you start. It seems indeed like groping amidst the dust of dead and buried mummies. It seems so utterly impossible for me to realize that she was ever a young girl. The story is a strange one. She loved my grandfather; in fact, she was engaged to him from little child, this woman, who is now Madame Lambert, but was once Ellen Horton. And my poor grandmother incurred her undying hatred because she was the innocent cause of alienating his affection. What a wild, fierce nature she must possess, that it can hold such implacable resentment! She met them on their wedding morning, and uttered her stern vow of vengeance in the presence of the frightened bride. My mother has told us how her mother would tremble and whiten, after years and years had rolled on, in relating the terrible oath of vengeance which her rival repeated, with her hand uplifted to heaven, her great black eyes flashing with lurid gleams. She said she would have vengeance upon them. She would poison every joy, snatch away every hope which smiled upon them, and hunt them down with her vengeance, even unto children's children! She has kept her word!"

"They gave little heed, at first, to her threats, believing her powerless to injure them, and thinking time would soften her resentment, but they had soon dreary proof of her earnestness. My grandfather had no fortune in his own right, but had been adopted by a wealthy bachelor uncle. How it was ever accomplished they never knew, except that it was by her agency, but the uncle became suddenly involved in speculations, a feverish mania seemed to have taken possession of him. He was misled by the wildest arts, and lured on until he had ruined himself, when his own suicidal hand ended his troubles.

"It was a terrible blow, of course, to poor grandfather, who was a high-spirited young man, but there was his wife, my mother's mother, you understand, who was the sole heiress of the great Lambert property. They were living at Greyslope, and Grandfather Lambert was very fond of them. He was an old man, and somewhat feeble, and his daughter left him reluctantly in the care of a faithful servant, only because the delicacy of her own health and the physician's peremptory orders required it. She was away three months, at the sea-

side, with her husband and babe, constantly in communication with Greyslope, and hearing no single note of alarm. Imagine then her horror and consternation, or being suddenly informed that her father, the poor, doting old man, had married Ellen Horton. It seems that the housekeeper had taken the alarm at last, and sent an urgent message for her young lady to return as speedily as possible, but this letter that woman, with the diabolical cunning which she has shown from beginning to end, found means to suppress. How she cajoled and flattered that poor old man, no one could aver, but everyone could guess. She ruled him with a rod of iron. She obtained complete control of the poor, weakened mind, and poisoned it so thoroughly against his only child, that he seemed to lose all his love and fondness. It was the final blow, when it was discovered at his death, that he had given into her life control the whole estate, so that only upon her death could my grandmother come into possession of her rightful due.

"An endless series of secret persecutions ensued. I will not pain my dear mother by the recital of them.

"Enough that my grandmother sank under them, and at her death-bed this remorseless woman appeared, to inflict the latest possible stab. Even there, witnessing a scene which must have melted a heart not made of iron or stone, she reiterated that terrible vow, and the dying woman's ear caught, amidst its latest earthly sounds, those stern, relentless words. 'I will hunt down the whole family. My vengeance shall reach unto your children's children, and before I die, I will see the last of your hated race!' Well, she has done her work thus far, with the same pitiless craftiness. It was through her means my poor uncle William was enticed into evil ways, and hurried to a drunkard's grave. It was her planning and conjuring that brought my father, hunted down from every decent employment because he married the daughter of the hated rival: I say it was her doing that he entered upon work in a pious atmosphere, which made of him the wreck he is. It is her doing, now, that poor Nolan is turned away wherever he may obtain foothold, and thrust out from earning an honourable living. It is her wrongful possession that drives us all out from our rightful sphere. Oh," ended Bella, with a passionate gesture, "this is all Madame Lambert's doing. Tell me, is she really a human being?"

"It is horrible!" exclaimed Lord Windermere, his strong admiration for the fair speaker flaming out in chivalrous eagerness to rush to her defence.

Miss Davenal sat shivering, all the beautiful colour faded out of her cheeks.

"It frightens me," said she in a low, quick voice; "this story, and that strange face of hers, affect me strangely. Somehow it seems as if it had a meaning for me. But impossible! absurd!"

"I am not sure but you will come under her ban for your kindness to us," answered Bella, wistfully.

Miss Davenal was silent and pale, for half an hour longer, and then perceiving the sort of gloomy restraint which had fallen upon the party, she roused herself, and was once more her own peculiarly brilliant self.

They left the Claxtons at their home, and did not accept Bella's somewhat feeble invitation to enter. Mrs. Claxton had scarcely a word to offer. It was plain her meeting with Madame Lambert had affected her unpleasantly. Ruth almost carried her into the house, and as she did so the poor white hands clasped around her neck with sudden fervour.

"Oh Ruth, dear Ruth, I have seen her, and her hatred is unpeased. She will work her wicked will. What use for us to struggle longer?"

"My poor dear lamb!" ejaculated Ruth, who used the same term of endearment for all the family, "don't you believe it, her time will come yet."

Bella paused, to wave a hand in adieu. As she did so, she glanced upwards at the decayed weather-beaten house, and said half scornfully:

"She would have taken even this poor shelter from us, had it been in her power, but it was left to our grandmother by a distant relative. I trust you will neither of you experience any annoyance from this afternoon's kindness to us."

"What a romantic story!" observed his lordship thoughtfully, as the carriage proceeded towards the railway once more. "And I should judge it was a remarkable and very interesting family."

"Unusually interesting, my lord," returned Miss Davenal, gravely, "those you have not seen are by no means less pleasing than the others."

"I never saw a more lovely person than Miss Claxton," continued Lord Windermere, musingly.

Miss Davenal looked up with a quick glinting of archness across her fine eyes.

"Lord Windermere, you might search out aristocratic circles through, and not find the lady who

would fill the mistress's place at Windermere Hall with such grace and stately dignity as this beautiful Bella, who was fitted by nature for just such a sphere. Do you remember a little talk of ours after a memorable conversation, when you thought me very heartless and cruel, but of which I am sure you have repented long ago?"

"About heroic deeds and high aims," observed his lordship, quickly, a slight flush stealing into his face. "I remember something about my absurd promise to achieve some knightly deed."

Miss Davenal's eyes were luminous with the smile which played dreamily over her lips.

"Ah," said he, "I know now. I remember it all. You said you should not be content with an ordinary hero; you wanted a Sir Galahad; and I, even after your peremptory refusal of my offer of marriage, promised that I would embrace the first noble quest which came to my hand, that I might be able to retain the humbler position of friend. I am afraid you must quite despise me, because I have not been able to find it yet."

His tone was humble and self-convicted.

"Nay," said she, promptly, "I like you very much as a friend, very much, indeed, Lord Windermere. You have, at least, higher aims and purer aspirations than others. Some time or other you will find your special mission, and then go forward bravely. I was wondering if this accidental detention to-day had not guided you, in the mysterious, providential fashion, to a glimpse of it; for, after all, there may be no more heroic deed than steadily braving the world's sneer and displeasure for a worthy object."

"I wonder," said Lord Windermere, looking curiously into the proud, dark, beautiful face; "I wonder, Miss Davenal, if you will ever meet a man who will equal your ideal? I wonder if you will ever find Sir Galahad?"

The same lambent glow shone again in her eyes, though the silken fringes of the eyelashes veiled it from his sight.

"One cannot say," answered Miss Davenal, slowly, "and yet I know the world holds one at least."

But here the carriage paused at the railway station, and his lordship was obliged to hasten.

"Good bye, Miss Davenal, I shall come here again," was his parting salutation.

CHAPTER XIII.

MADAME LAMBERT did not pursue her ride on that day when Miss Davenal's carriage met hers at the avenue gate of Greyslope. The coachman heard her sharp voice begin an abrupt order, and suddenly break off with a gasp. Stooping down, he looked through the window, and saw her sitting bolt upright, hands clenched, mouth gaping hideously, and eyes rolled up and set.

He turned about speedily, and dashed up the avenue at a clattering pace, which brought John and Maria, and even his pretty Lorette, in a panic to the windows.

"What's happened now?" ejaculated Maria, who came rushing down the steps.

"Something is the matter with Madame Lambert," explained the coachman. "Tell John to help me take her out."

Between them they carried her up to her chamber, and put her on the bed in an upright position, apparently insensible.

"Shall I go for the doctor?" asked the coachman.

"Don't ask me!" exclaimed Maria, shaking her head in her nervous, emphatic fashion. "I ain't a-going to take the responsibility!—no, indeed, I ain't. Oh! was there ever another place where they have such times as we do here!"

"Of course she needs the doctor. She will die if she is left so," replied the coachman, impatiently, for though he stood in due awe of his mistress, himself being free from the imperious tyranny of the house, by means of his living at home in his own cottage, he could not understand their abject servility.

"But if she dies I suppose she can't come back to scold us for it; and if we send for a doctor, we shall be sure to take it. Oh, John, shan't we have to take it?"

John stood debating the question.

"You see," said he, slowly, in a guardedly careful voice, "Madame is a terrible woman, a terrible set woman; and she don't like doctors, and she's raving set against them."

"But she hadn't rather die than have one, had she?"

"Madame Lambert won't die now. She says she shall live twenty years longer; and when she says a thing she does it. Madame Lambert won't die now," said John, gravely.

"Oh, dear! if only Mr. Forsay was here. But he

has gone down to the factory, I know, for I saw him set off," cried Maria, eyeing the rigid figure drearily.

"I shall go for the doctor myself," said the coachman, coming to a decision for himself; "but one of you might watch, and let me know, if she comes to before I get him here, in which case I could turn him back, and she be none the wiser."

"I'll be right on hand at the front door," said John, hurrying out after him, and following him down stairs.

Lorette was already down in the kitchen, getting hot water ready, and such other simple means as she judged might be needed.

Maria stood a moment in the chamber alone with the insensible mistress, but she could not endure it to remain, and running out, she called in a wild, frightened voice:

"John, John, you ain't-a-going to leave me there all alone. I say I won't stay all alone with her!"

John was below, still consulting about the disposal of the physician, in case the patient revived and refused to see him, and Maria, glad of any excuse to get away from the responsibility which was such a nightmare to her, hurried into the kitchen, and began to help there at totally unnecessary preparations.

"I'll take care of things here, Lorette," said she, with an innocent air of unconcern, "supposing you run up into the chamber."

"Oh dear, no, indeed. Besides, I must be watching that cake for Mr. Forsay's supper," answered Lorette, wide awake to the strategy employed.

John was still at the front door, and there was Madame Lambert in her chamber, insensible, but not alone. From the covered entrance to the balcony, there was a door, always locked, and the key was supposed to remain solely in Madame Lambert's pocket. Nevertheless, when John and Maria had abandoned their post, that door opened slowly and cautiously, and Mat Rigby came silently into the chamber. He went up to the bedside hastily. A dull red flush was on his face, the cool gray eyes held now a spark of fire, the hand which sought the withered wrist trembled violently. He bent over her, and made a physician's careful examination, and when he lifted his head the colour had left his face, which was as pale as marble, and the lips were set grimly under the grizzly moustache.

The hand, which had dropped its hold of the wrist, crept slowly towards the open, gasping mouth. He cast a quick, inquiring glance towards the door, and back again to the gleaming necklace of jewels with a strange, almost savage glare in his eyes; but just as the desperate fingers reached those livid lips the arm was jerked back, and Mat Rigby stood shivering from head to foot, while at the same time the great beads of perspiration rolled off his forehead.

The man was undergoing some terrible mental struggle. Again and again his hand moved to its projected work, and yet again was it withdrawn, and he hung back, appalled.

"Heaven knows it is a terrible temptation," he thought, "and man could hardly blame me!"

And then, just as John's step was heard in the hall below, he turned, and fled hastily by the way he had come.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE French paper-makers are offering a prize to any one who will produce and apply in France any new material for paper-making.

BARON HAUSSEMAN, having made Paris the handsomest city in the world, is now intent on making it a port, and to that intent is about to deepen the Seine, and raise its level, so that vessels of moderate burden shall reach the quays of Paris.

ACCORDING to the official returns of the proportion of inland telegrams to letters in various countries, it appears that to every 100,000 persons, one telegram to thirty-seven letters is received in Belgium; one to sixty-nine in Switzerland; and one to 121 in the United Kingdom.

THE Great Pyramid is reported to have been raised by 100,000 men, working for twenty years, and it contains 3,394,307 cubic yards of stone. The coal raised by about 250,000 British coal miners in the year 1865 was about 100,000,000 cubic yards, or thirty times the bulk of the Great Pyramid.

RAIN.—It is stated as the result of careful observation for six years at Greenwich Observatory, that rain is more frequent between noon and midnight than between midnight and noon. The smallest rainfall takes place in the morning, as the sun is going up; the greatest in the afternoon, as the sun is setting.

ARTIFICIAL PRODUCTION OF NATURAL ESSENCES.—Nothing is more interesting than to note the growing power of modern organic chemistry to pro-

duce in the laboratory the substances formed by nature. Recently allusion was made to the artificial production of coumarin by Mr. Perkin. Coumarin, the substance to which the Tonka bean owes its fragrance, and to which fresh-mown hay and various odoriferous flowers owe their peculiar perfumes, can now be produced artificially in the laboratory. Mr. Perkin obtained it by acting upon acetic anhydride by a sodic derivative of salicylic acid. Recently again, M. Dusart has produced artificial essence of almonds, and obtains a product that can be used in perfumery by acting upon hydrate of benzoin with prussic acid. The mixture is kept at a moderate heat for several hours in an apparatus provided with a refrigerator; the product is first washed with water, then with a weak alkaline solution, and finally rectified. The essence thus produced is identical with the natural essence. Some time since, we heard also that Dr. Phipson has discovered essence of rue in the products of decomposition of salicylic acid, when the violet compound which this acid forms with persalts of iron is submitted to distillation.

PICKLING BRASS.

THE work, to be brightened and coloured, is first annealed in a red-hot muffle, or over an open fire, allowing the cooling to extend over one hour; the object of the heating being to remove the grease or dirt that may have accumulated during the process of fitting. Soft soldered work, however, must be annealed before fitted together, and afterwards boiled in a lye of potash; this is also done with work having ornamental surfaces. Next, it is immersed in a bath of diluted oil of vitriol or aquafortis, which may be made with two or three parts of water, and one of acid; but the old acid that contains a small quantity of copper, in solution, is frequently preferred. The work is allowed to remain in this liquid for one or two hours, according to the strength of the acid; it is then well rinsed in water, and scoured with sand, which is applied with an ordinary scrubbing-brush, and washed. The "pickling bath" is made by dissolving 1 part of zinc in 8 parts of nitric acid of 36 deg. Baumé, in a porcelain vessel, and adding a mixture of 8 parts of nitric acid, and 8 parts of oil of vitriol. Heat is then applied, and when the liquid is boiling, the work is plunged into it for half a minute, or until the violent development of nitrous vapours ceases, and the surface is getting uniform. Then it is plunged into clean water, and well rinsed, to remove the acid. The ordinary, dark grayish-yellow tint, which is thus very often produced, is removed in immersing the works again in aquafortis for a very short time. Then they are plunged into clean or slightly alkaline water, well rinsed to remove the acid, and plunged into warm dry beech or boxwood sawdust, and rubbed until quite dry. To prevent the action of the atmosphere they are lacquered; if a green tint is to be produced, the lacquer is coloured with turmeric. A dark, grayish, but agreeable tint, is obtained by immersing the work previously in a solution of white arsenic in hydrochloric acid, or in a solution of bichloride of platinum, under addition of some vinegar, or rubbing with plumbago.

THE SUEZ CANAL.—We received recently some important details as to the progress of the Suez canal works. It appears that in the month ending March 15, the total extraction of earth amounted to 1,554,630 cubic metres, as compared with 1,466,428 cubic metres in the month ending February 15, and 1,130,386 cubic metres in the month ending January 15. The quantity of earth remaining to be extracted, March 15, 1868, was estimated at 36,005,181 cubic metres. It will be seen that the extraction is progressively increasing, and it is now calculated that the canal will be completed by the close of 1869.

A REMARKABLE medicinal spring, on the island of Jamaica, has just been brought to notice. An analysis of the water, which Dr. Attfield reported at a meeting of the London Pharmaceutical Society, shows that every gallon contains 3½ oz. of chloride of calcium, 2 oz. of salt, and 2½ grains of chloride of ammonium. The proportion of chloride of calcium Dr. Attfield believed to be unprecedented. The therapeutic action of this salt is most useful for the treatment of scrofulous affections and glandular swellings, a fact known to the negroes on the island, who have valued and used the water for medicinal purposes upwards of forty years.

CURE FOR A SMOKY CHIMNEY.—I often see remarks on what is called "the Smoky Chimney question"; and complaints are constantly made against architects and builders for smoky rooms; therefore I suppose you will not object to make public a cheap, simple, and sure remedy for eight out of every ten bad chimneys, without the requirement of unsightly chimney-pots. I find from experience that, by the use of fine wire gauze, of from 36 to 40 wires to the inch, as a screen, blower, or guard, judiciously ap-

plied to register stoves, ranges, or stove doors, little if any smoke will come into a room. The atmospheric pressure prevents the smoke entering the room through the gauze; and if applied immediately to the front of the fire, more smoke will be consumed than by any other means. In that case the wire should be kept 2 in. from immediate contact with the hot fire. Any respectable ironmonger will readily supply both cheap and ornamental screens of this kind, either as permanent or movable.—I. O. U.

NEW PRODUCTIONS OF VICTORIA.—Amongst the new industries recently developed in Gipps' Land are the production of brimstone, which is abundant at Buchan, near the north-end of the lakes; and slate, for roofing, which has been quarried at Glenmaggie, and is apparently plentiful. A ton was sent to Melbourne, and approved of. In a very short time an important manufactory will be added to the numerous list of colonial industries that have sprung into existence recently. The first paper-mill in the colony is now being erected. A few months ago the necessary buildings were commenced, and have since been continued with such vigour that within a very short time papermaking will have commenced. An experienced foreman has been engaged; and the machinery, all of which is highly finished, and furnished with the latest improvements, was made in Edinburgh. The entire outlay will be about 20,000£.

NEW TRENT BRIDGE FOR NOTTINGHAM.

THE town council have resolved to erect a new bridge in place of the old Trent bridge from a design by their surveyor, Mr. Tarbotton, at a cost of 31,000£. The site will be a little lower down the river than that of the old bridge. The structural part of the bridge will be allied in its mechanical details to the modern bridges over the Seine and the Thames.

The material for the abutments and piers below the lowest watermark, as also for the hearting of the same, will be of the best brickwork. The exposed surfaces of the abutments and piers will be formed of rock-faced Derbyshire or Yorkshire grit-stone, with the more ornamental parts of red sandstone, magnesian limestone, and granite. The arches will be of cast-iron, as being most suitable to resist the strains pertaining to the condition of the ribs employed. The upper platform to support the roadway will consist of wrought-iron girders supporting wrought-iron buckled plates as used, on Westminster and on the largest railway bridges, or similar material. The surface of the roadway will be of Yorkshire landings for the footpaths, bituminized concrete and macadam for the carriage-road, and cast-iron channels, similar to those used by Mr. Tarbotton in building the Navigation Bridge, for the gutters. The parapets will be of cast-iron, with geometric ornamental open work, containing medallions composed of lilies and other water flowers and leaves, made of cast-iron and conventionally treated.

These are intended to be gilded, and the rest of the ironwork painted. The width of the bridge clear of the parapets will be 40 ft., containing footpath 8 ft. 6 in. wide, and a roadway capable of accommodating three lines of carriages with ease and safety.

THE plumbago mines of Canada are represented to be one of the most important of the mineral productions which the new dominion possesses. Several companies are conducting operations on an extensive scale in the county of Ottawa, and many others will be organized the coming season. The extent of the plumbaginous deposits in the crystalline rocks is said to be very large; the deposits, however, are intersected in some districts with a calcareous formation, from which the plumbago is not easily separated. Plumbago finds an employment in the various arts and manufactures to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed, the cities of Boston and New York alone consuming upwards of ten thousand tons annually. Hitherto the greater part of this supply has been imported from Germany and Ceylon, but the time may not be far distant when the Canadian mines will fully supply the entire American market.

THE ROBIN REDBREAST.—It is a curious fact that the love of our race is so innate in the robin as to render him unhappy in any other society—excepting only in the breeding season, when all birds are naturally shy for the welfare of their offspring. Go into any wood, walk down any shady lane, enter any cemetery, seat yourself in any churchyard, or perch yourself on any rural stile—within a few moments you will have a robin beside you, and he will assuredly introduce himself with a song. It is in vain for you to say "haw." He fairly fascinates you; he moves your heart, and wins it. How many successes in winning human hearts are attributable to the hints afforded by this ingenious, bold, open-hearted, all-conquering bird.



[DOCTOR CARTWRIGHT'S INTERESTING PATIENT.]

CORDELIA'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER III.

In the lower hall I found Mr. Larkton and Walter Fitzroy waiting. Both the men looked eager and anxious, but what a difference in the expression of the two faces. One bore the stamp of prayer and supplication, betraying a desire for Christian hope; while the other looked to me as I would have pictured the face of Satan, while playing for a human soul!

I know some of you will tell me that I was foolish in my feelings towards that man, but I could not help those feelings. Suppose, dear reader, you should behold the strange anomaly of a man's body with the head of a serpent? Would you not turn from the monster in fear and loathing? Well, to me the structure of that man's head was almost as emphatic in its sign of evil, as would be to the case I have supposed. And, furthermore, I began now to believe that Fitzroy was a suitor for the sick girl's hand. Were I to tell you my feelings upon that point, you would deem me more foolish still, and perhaps tell me I was not fit for a physician.

I looked into Walter Fitzroy's face; and I felt sure that there was to be more than enmity between us!

"Well, doctor," said the host, trying to appear calm, and to show that he was not weak enough to indulge hope, against the decisions of so many eminent physicians, "I suppose you find no ground for hope?"

"Mr. Larkton," I replied, "I shall be frank with you. I dare not offer you the consolation of hope; but still, if your daughter were a relative, or a dear friend of mine, I should not give her up."

He caught my hand and spoke quickly and earnestly:

"Doctor Cartwright, I beg of you, do not trifle with me. If you are in want of fees, name your price, and let me pay it—let me pay it for the truth—but oh, do not seek to—"

I stopped him. He fancied that I might be induced to hold out a false hope for the sake of keeping a valuable patient.

"Mr. Larkton, if you suppose that I could descend to that depth, you do not know me. I offer you no hope. I shall come again to-morrow, and make further examination; but even then I can promise you nothing; the life of your child is a ponderous weight suspended by a thread. No man can tell if she will live. But I tell you, were she my sister, I should not give her up without further effort."

"Forgive me, sir!" he cried, again grasping my hand. "Forgive me, and forget what I have said. Take my child, and save her if you can. She is your patient, and in your hands I confide her."

I promised him that I would do what I could, and then I took my leave. Once more alone in my room, with nothing to distract my attention, I sat down and reflected. I called to mind three cases which had come under my observation and partial treatment in the hospital, and after much study I decided positively, that Miss Larkton's disease was an hepatic abscess. All the symptoms pointed that way. Since Dr. M—— had seen her, the tumour had increased remarkably, and had he been called in with me, with no preconceived opinion upon his mind, he would have so decided. At all events, I felt sure that I was right.

And now—if it were an abscess, of course it must mature and break of itself. If it discharged into the abdominal cavity, it was death. But—if it discharged, by way of the excretory duct, into the alimentary canal, she would be likely to live—proper treatment after that, might restore her to perfect health. So there were the chances—just about even—and no mortal power could determine what the result would be. The discharge was as likely to be one way as the other. Life hung upon the hazard of a die.

On the afternoon of the following day I called action according to promise, and a thrill of peculiar satisfaction shot through my frame, as I saw that the beautiful sufferer greeted me with pleasure. She took my hand as though we had been friends for years, and tried to tell me how much better she felt. She had slept several hours during the night, and she felt better in every way.

Oh, if she could have known what exquisite pangs of anxiety I suffered, she would not have smiled so sweetly; but I conquered the pain in a measure. I tried to forget the slender thread of chance by which her life was suspended, and to remember only the dark cloud of fatality which I had removed. I made farther examination, and in the end I was perfectly satisfied with my diagnosis of the disease.

But not yet did I tell her or her parents what I thought was the matter. I simply told them that the truth would be known in a very few days, and that if the patient lived a month, she might live many years.

At the earnest request of the young lady and her parents I visited her daily; and I continued the opiates, in very mild quality and quantity, because I knew that she could not possibly need them much longer, let the end be what it would.

One day I called late in the afternoon, and found my patient suffering most acute pain. I knew the end was at hand, and so I told her.

"Courage, Cordelia," I said; for so I had become accustomed to call her—as her father and her mother did—"courage, my dear girl. This pain cannot last long."

Before I went away I told Mrs. Larkton that the disease was reaching its culminating point, and I told her there might be spasms and much sinking; and when that time came, I wished her to send for me. I spoke cheerfully to the poor sufferer, and assured her that she would not be long in pain. In the parlour I took the mother's hand, and told her that only heaven knew what the event would be on the morrow.

"The end is at hand," I added, "and whether it is to be life or death I cannot tell. The chances are so nicely balanced that only the finger of fate is to turn the scale. When the symptoms of which I have spoken present themselves, I wish you to send for me. Your child may soon be more easy—she may lose all pain—and anon the pangs may reappear sharper than ever. But be not alarmed therat, for those must come. Only, when you detect the other signs, send for me. I will allow nothing else to call me far away from my home to-night."

When I reached my room I sat down to my diary, and read over my minutes of the course which had been pursued in two like cases in the hospital. I not only had full minutes of the diagnoses and treatment, but I had marked down the observations and practical hints of the old physician in charge. I thus busied myself while I could see by the light of day, and when I had lighted my lamp I turned to my budget of daily papers. I read until ten o'clock, and was thinking of lying down upon my couch, when the street-door was opened, and in walked my firm, steadfast friend, the cooper.

"Doctor," he said, without as much as bidding me good evening, "excuse me for breaking in upon you at this hour; but I saw that your lamp was burning, and I knew you must be up. There's a poor woman, sir—a stranger—at my house, and I'm afraid she's dying. Will you go with me and see her?"

How could I? That was the first question. But the second was quite as important. How could I refuse? I called a boy whom I had hired to care for my horse, and take charge of my room during my absence, and directed him to remain there until I returned. If he were sleepy he might lie down; but he must not leave the house; and if a messenger came for me from Mr. Larkton's, he was to come directly to Mr. Stevens's and let me know. On the way with the

cooper, he informed me that the woman was an entire stranger to him, and he judged her to be a stranger in the place. She had come to his door after nine o'clock and begged for food and shelter; but upon entering the house her strength had entirely failed her, and neither he nor his wife had been able to restore her.

The distance to the dwelling of Mrs. Stevens was not great, and upon reaching it the cooper's wife at once led me to the bed-room, on the lower floor, where the stranger lay. I found her to be a young woman, not more than five or six-and-twenty, and her face, now pale and thin, and coloured by exposure, must have been at some former time very beautiful; for her features were of the finest and most faultless mould, and every outline and natural turn of contour was of that stamp which belongs only to the child of refinement and early advantages. She was breathing with spasmodic jerks of the diaphragm, and was still insensible. I was not long in making up my mind that the woman was suffering from heart disease, and that it had been induced by a troubled mind. When I had directed Mrs. Stevens how to proceed in the effort to restore a proper circulation, I sat down by the bedside and held the patient's wrist.

"You say she did not speak to you at all?" said I, as the good wife was busy with the hot flannels.

"Not after she came into the house," replied the cooper. "She spoke plainly enough outside; but when she had got in, it seemed as though she had borne all she could—as if her strength had held out till it had taken her to a place of shelter, and then failed her. But there was a letter, sir.—Nancy, where did you put it?"

"It is on the shelf, Adam."

The cooper got up, and went to the little shelf over the fireplace, and brought a letter—or, at least, what appeared to be a letter. It was a buff envelope, with a superscription which the honest host had not been able to decipher, and within there seemed to be a missive of some kind. The packet was much soiled, as though with long wear and often handling.

"My wife found it in her bosom, sir; and when she attempted to take it out, the poor woman seemed to know for a moment what was being done, for she put up her hands, and her eyes half opened; but she sank back again, and we took the letter, and put it on the mantelpiece. We did not open it, sir; we thought we had no right to do so. It seemed to be some sacred secret thing that she kept holy; and we thought we'd put it away until she recovered; and if she died, why, then, we could open it."

I could not but profoundly respect the instinctive honesty of this worthy couple. How many in their situation—ay, in any situation—would have done the same? There was no hesitation in the matter—no curiosity to overstep the bounds of propriety; but only the duty they owed to the poor waif who had thus fallen beneath their care occupied their minds.

I took the packet in my hand, and it felt as though there might be two or three ordinary letters within; and the name which had puzzled the good cooper and his wife, I managed to read without difficulty. It was: "Celestine St. Marcellin, care of—" (here a name had been so obliterated that I could not make it out, and with it what appeared to have been the name of the street, and the number thereof).

Another look at the pale, wan face, satisfied me that the woman was a French Creole, and I thought there must have been something of more than ordinary moment that could have brought her here. But ere I had opportunity for any farther conversation with the cooper, the wayfarer gasped and struggled, and presently opened her eyes. She gazed awhile vacantly, as though not fully conscious; but very soon she saw the woman bending over her, and spoke:

"Where am I? Who are you?"

"I am Nancy Stevens, and this is my husband, and here is the good doctor," said our hostess, as though a regard for truth demanded that she should be full and explicit in her explanation.

The sufferer closed her eyes again, and ere long she seemed to have called to mind the circumstances of her experience, previous to entering the cooper's cottage.

"I remember," she said; "I fainted at your door."

"No," corrected Nancy, "you fainted in our kitchen. You came from the door well enough. But never mind. You are in good hands, and we will care for you until you are able to go on your way. Do you belong to this neighbourhood?"

Dame Stevens spoke so kindly, and there was such a winning manner in her look and tone, that the poor waif seemed to give to the matron her confidence at once.

"Oh, no," she said, in a sort of low wail, after

reflecting a moment with her eyes closed, "I belong a great way from here—a very great way."

"Oh, yes, certainly. You belong to London."

The invalid started with a quick gasp, and caught her kind nurse by the wrist.

"Have I been talking since I fainted here?"

"Oh, no—not at all," replied the truthful nurse.

"We saw your name on the letter."

The woman put her hand quickly to her bosom, and with a sharp cry of distress she started to a sitting posture.

"My letter! My letter! Oh, where is it?"

"Here it is, my dear."

"Have you read it?"

"No—we haven't even opened it, my dear. It wasn't ours to read. It fell out from your bosom while I was trying to bring you to, and we laid it aside to keep it for you."

"And you haven't read a word of it?—you haven't looked into it?" cried the wanderer, with strange eagerness.

"Not a soul has looked into it, my dear—not a soul; so make your mind easy."

At this point I took my seat by the woman's side—for I had got up and gone to the mantelpiece when I looked at the letter—and placed my fingers upon her wrist.

She cast a quick, searching glance into my face, and I could see very plainly that she was not afraid of me.

"This is the doctor, my dear," explained Nancy, "and you needn't be a bit afraid of him. If anybody can do you any good, he can."

The stranger looked again into my face, this time with more of a thoughtful expression; and after a while she said, in a natural tone of voice, which was very sweet and pure, her accent being strongly French:

"Doctor, I do not think I shall be ill. I am only weary and faint from much fatigue."

"This is not the first time you have been taken in this way?" I queried.

"No," she said, with some reluctance; "but I have never been taken only when I have over-fatigued myself, as I have now."

I told her she would not be likely to be ill if she took care of herself; but she must make up her mind to remain where she was for a few days. If she would do that, I would answer for the return of strength. And after I had told her what treatment she would be likely to require, I asked her if that was her name upon the back of the letter.

"Yea, sir," she said, but she hesitated considerably, before she answered. "That is my name; but, sir—and you, good people,—do not, I beg of you, speak of me in public. Oh! if you would only tell me what to do without asking me any questions! Will you not try?"

She sat up still higher from the pillow, and then, in an earnest prayerful manner, she went on:

"As true as there is a God in heaven, I have done no wrong. If I have reason to fear, it is because others would wrong me. Oh! I pray you, believe me when I assure you that I am not a bad woman. If you are kind to me, your kindness will not be in vain. I may not pay you in money, though I have a little—"

At this moment good Nancy broke in, and stopped her.

"Don't speak to us of money, my poor, dear, dear thing! I know you can't have done any wicked thing, and you shall be cared for here, and you shall tell us what you please, and you shall keep to yourself what you please; so now make yourself as comfortable as you can."

The woman expressed her thanks, and said that she might at some time or other be able to repay her friends for their kindness; and then she asked me how long I thought it would be before she could go to London.

Did she mean to walk to London?

Yes. She had walked most of the distance, though she had been a long time in doing it. She had not much money, but she had a few jewels of rare quality, and when she reached London she could sell them.

I asked her if she had friends in London.

She started as if an arrow had struck her; and presently she answered, in a tone so painful that it pierced me to the soul:

"Heaven only knows what I have, sir! It may be, that on all the earth I have not a friend left! Oh! heaven help me, if I am deserted!"

She rested her head upon her pillow as she thus spoke, and buried her face in her hands; and I went away without telling her how long it would be before she could resume her wearisome journey; but ere I went, I promised the good people of the cottage that I would call again on the morrow.

And as I wended my way to my office I asked myself: Who is Celestine St. Marcellin? What is she?

What is her story? I felt a strong presentiment that she was to stand as a prominent character in an important chapter in my life. I felt it as strongly as though an angel from heaven had spoken with a prophetic tongue.

But when I reached my house all thoughts of the strange waif were banished from my mind, for a messenger had just arrived from the mansion with tidings that Miss Larkton was dying!

CHAPTER IV.

The announcement of the messenger startled me somewhat, though I did not credit his assertion. I made all possible haste to the mansion of the banker, and when I met Mr. Larkton in his lower hall I found him deeply agitated.

"Doctor, I fear you are too late!"

"No, no," I cried. "Do not tell me that."

But the old man shook his head.

Had the disease, at its culmination, taken the fatal turn, death, though sure, would not have come so quickly unless the heart was seriously affected; and surely I had detected no signs of that. I hurried up to the chamber, where I found Mrs. Larkton sitting by the side of the great easy-chair, with her daughter's head drawn over upon her bosom. I approached on the opposite side, and found the patient breathing heavily—just as one breathes who has passed some exhaustive ordeal.

Her eyes were closed; her thin white hands were grasping her mother's wrists, and her bosom rose and fell at regular intervals. She heard my step, and looked up, and as she met my gaze she smiled. I drew up a chair and sat down by her side, and removing one of her hands from her mother's wrist, she transferred it to me.

"Cordelia," I called her so because I had found that it pleased her—it placed her physician on a more intimate and confidential footing with her—"Cordelia, how do you feel?"

"I feel better," she said.

"But you have been suffering great pain?"

She bowed her head in the attempt to gather language by which to convey to me an idea of what she had suffered. In a moment more she looked up and shook her head.

"I cannot tell you what I have suffered during the past hour." And placing her hand upon the right side, she continued: "Ten thousand daggers seemed piercing me here. The pain grew more and more intense and excruciating, until I fairly grew faint; and then suddenly, like the breaking up of many waters from the thralldom of icy bonds, there came a terrible shock, and I thought I should never see my good doctor again!"

I smiled as I asked her:

"And you thought of me?"

She answered, soberly:

"Yes. You had been so kind to me; and then I knew you were so anxious. How could I help it?"

I think it would be difficult to conceive of a more exquisite sense of grateful pleasure than was that which thrilled my soul as the maiden spoke those words. In that season of mortal anguish, when she believed death was close at hand, her thoughts were of me! But I did not dwell upon this then. It was like the flash of a meteor—a momentary blaze of bewildering light—and then I came down to the sober reality before me. When she had concluded her description of suffering, I asked her if she was willing that I should make a farther examination.

It did not take me a great while. I only kept my ear pressed upon the surface a little below the pyloric region, until I had caught sounds that I had been hoping—for sounds that were worth more than a monarch's ransom—sounds that told of a life saved—and then I raised my head and took her hand.

"Miss Larkton—"

I caught the quick shade of dissatisfaction that manifested itself upon her face as I thus addressed her, and with a light smile I corrected myself:

"Cordelia, the crisis is passed. In spite of all that this disease can do you shall behold the snows of many winters!"

Her mother caught the words, and started to her feet.

"Doctor—oh! is it true? Do you speak soberly?"

"Yes, madam," I replied. "The turn is favourable. Heaven has in mercy spared your child."

Cordelia cast one grateful, happy glance into my face, and then sinking forward into her mother's arms, she burst into tears; and they both wept and sobbed like children whose souls had been suddenly overwhelmed.

Mr. Larkton, who had stepped out for something, came in that moment; and when he beheld the scene, he stopped—clasped his hands upon his breast—and then tottered forward.

"Isadora!"—laying his hand upon his wife's shoulder—"Isadora!"

"Oh! Andrew—my husband! Our child is saved!"

"Saved?" gasped the father, seeming fearful that he might not have understood. And then, as though remembering that I was present, he bent upon me a look of earnest inquiry.

I told him that he might put away his fears. The line that had been drawn by the hand of chance had been passed, and the patient was upon the safe side. I knew that the abscess had broken, and I knew that the natural avenue of the system was acting as the medium of discharge. All now that remained to be done was to administer such medicine as I judged would most easily, at the same time, most surely, assist the great viscera in throwing off its unnatural load. I shall not tell what I gave, because some of my friends who are rigidly sensitive in the matter might condemn me, in that I had departed from the faith of the reformer. However, I exercised great care, and went away with the firm conviction that I had done what was for the best. In the hall I stopped to speak with Mrs. Larkton, desiring her simply to take particular notice of certain symptoms, so as to report to me on the morrow.

In the lower hall I met Walter Fitzroy. He had been aroused by the sending away of the messenger for me, and knowing when I arrived, had come down to wait for my appearance. I had learned from Mrs. Larkton that he did not make at his home. He had apartments at the hotel, but was stopping at the mansion now to assist them while they feared that Cordelia was so near her end.

"Doctor, what is the result?"

I thought afterwards how wicked it was, and how inhuman, but I could not help the emotion. It fairly crossed the grain of my feelings to tell him that the lady was safe; but I told him, though I am sure I told him grudgingly—as I would have given alms to one who I was sure did not deserve them.

"Bravo, doctor!" he cried, slapping me familiarly on the shoulder.

We spoke farther, but that is enough. That one expression tells the whole story. In it I read the character and the soul of the man. He spoke as he would have spoken if he had won a heavy purse at a horse-race.

There was no depth of gratitude; no instinct of devotion; no disposition to turn the heart towards heaven in its outburst of thankfulness; but only the sensual, mercenary, heartless joy of the gamester who has won a prize in some golden scheme of hazard.

From that moment I disliked the man, if possible, more than before, and I determined to find out if he was an accepted suitor for the hand of Miss Larkton.

And what did I mean to do after I had found out that? I could not tell. In fact, I think the question did not then occur to me. In my heart there was born a prayer, and that prayer went up to heaven, with the aim that my patient might be spared the fate of coming up out of the shadow of physical death only to fall into the state of moral and social death which I believed would surely result from union with Walter Fitzroy. At that time there was no selfishness in the wish,—I think not a particle.

What came afterwards matters not here; but on that night, as I walked slowly homeward, praying that the girl might not be consigned to that man's keeping, I know that my prayer was wholly and entirely without thought of self. I was moved, as I had been moved to save her from the grasp of fatal disease.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning when I reached my bed; but, late as it was, my head had pressed my pillow a long while ere I slept. I had been in practice only about a month, and already my career as a physician was opening with curious and complicated events.

And from these events I wondered what was to come. I was imaginative—strongly so; and was prone to lie awake while I should have slept, and dream upon my fancy for wonderful things that might come to pass, and for other wonderful things that I wished would come to pass.

During the forenoon of the next day I called at the coopers', where I found Celestine St. Marcellin sitting up, but yet quite feeble. I shook my head when I looked upon her, and when I had felt her pulse, I shook it again. There was a slow fever upon her, and I told Mrs. Stevens that she must make up her mind to keep the wayfarer for several days at least.

"No, no," cried Celestine. "Don't say so, doctor." But I assured her that it would be dangerous for her to move before her present febrile symptoms were subdued. And I explained to her that another attack, like the one she had on the night before,

might be fatal. With all her sufferings she was not prepared for death; and when she came to believe that it would be really dangerous for her to start for London as she was now, she consented to stop.

"If I must remain here," she said, "I shall try to be resigned to my fate. But I shall have to depend upon you to serve me."

I told her I would serve her to any extent in my power; and after this she dropped a remark which implied that she would like to speak with me alone. At all events Mrs. Stevens as understood it, and very considerably left the room. Celestine waited until the hostess had begun to busy herself about work in the kitchen, and then she drew a small bit of soft leather—a roll of chamois skin I thought—from her bosom, and she took therefrom a ring.

"Doctor," she said, "I know that these good people, beneath whose roof I have thus accidentally fallen, are poor; and I can not consent to remain here, feeling that I am burden to them. Were I to do so, I should suffer enough to prevent me from getting well. Here is a ring, containing a diamond of the very finest quality. It is mine, sir—truly and honourably so. It came to me when I was situated differently from this. Fear not to dispose of it as you may find opportunity, for I give you my word, based upon the hope that all evil may be mine if I deceive you, that what I have told you is the truth. I have more of them, sir; so I am not reducing myself. For my own sake I do not ask you to help me, so much as for the sake of these good people. If I am to remain here I must pay them. So will you sell that ring for me?"

I took it in my hand and examined it. It was a beautiful gem, and I knew that it must be valuable; but how valuable I could not determine, and so confessed to her.

"It is the smallest gem I have," she told me, "and ought to bring at least fifty pounds; but you will get what you can for it."

I finally told the woman that I would do the business for her upon one condition, and that was, that she would not seek to press any of her money upon me. And she answered me directly with a smile:

"We shall not quarrel about that, doctor. But you will agree with me that I ought to pay this generous-hearted man and his wife something for their trouble?"

I told her if she felt that she could afford it, it would be no more than right.

The woman was sitting by the side of the bed in the small apartment where she had slept, and at this point she leaned her head upon the pillow with her face resting upon her hands, and so she remained for some time.

"Doctor," she said, when she at length looked up, "I think you are a kind-hearted, honourable man, and I think your friendship, once secured, would be true and lasting."

I assured her that I did not think she had misjudged me. She had but to make known the manner in which I could befriend her, and I would do it if it lay in my power.

"I cannot tell you now," she said.

She reflected a few moments, and then said:

"When I go to London, I may go into danger, and I may wish to take the precaution of leaving behind me such information as would furnish a clue to my identity, should I be missing. Oh, sir, if I were to tell you my story of wrong, I know you would sympathize with me; but I cannot tell you now. Perhaps," she went on, with a smile that brought out to view more of her loveliness of feature than I had before detected, "I have done wrong to excite in your bosom a curiosity which I cannot satisfy; but, sir, believe me, I have intended no idle prating. At some time I may wish to tell you my whole story, but I cannot tell it now. Oh, I hope you do not think me a base, degraded thing?"

I gave her the solemn assurance that I did not, and she then resumed:

"Unfortunate I have been and deeply sinned against, but I have done no willing wrong. I know you wonder why I, a weak, defenceless woman am so far from my home, and why I have come so much of the way on foot. But, sir, it is only from Chester that I have been on foot. In that town I tried to sell this very jewel which I have given to you, and they feared to purchase it—feared that I might have stolen it. But Dr. Cartwright, as I hope for heaven's mercy and for the guiding hands of sweet angels when I die, I have not, nor will I in the time to come, speak one word to deceive you."

The woman stopped here, and gazed steadily into my face for several seconds—gazed so fixedly into my eyes that I should have been forced to drop my own gaze if she had not broken the spell when she did.

"Dr. Cartwright, I believe you can be an earnest and sincere friend, and before I leave this place I

may, of necessity, trust in your keeping my whole story. For the present, suffice it for me to say that I am on my way to the metropolis, to seek that which is lost, and which I must find if I can."

She had no more to tell me then, and having promised her that I would be her friend—that I would dispose of her ring—and that I would set her upon her journey as quickly as possible, I called in the hostess, and gave such directions as I thought necessary, and then left the cottage.

Upon taking up my abode in Ashdale, I had united myself with a society of Brothers—band of craftsmen linked together by indissoluble bonds of sincere affection—and within the walls of their sacred retreat I found myself at once among true friends. I had received light ere I came to this place, and when I made myself known to the fraternity and demanded admittance to their sittings, the thought of material benefit had no place in my mind. It was the social field I sought, and I found it in the beauty of perfection—found it where the internal and not the external, qualifications of a man are regarded—where all meet upon the level—where they act and part upon the square.

And so I had come to know a man who did business in London, while his family resided here in Ashdale, he coming out as often as his business would let him. He was a jeweller, and him I sought. He examined the jewel, and when I had told him as much of the story as there was need of my telling, and had assured him that I would bear the responsibility in case of possible trouble, he took the gem, and paid me fifty pounds for it. It happened to be something that he wanted for a gentleman's bosom-pin that had been ordered; and he took it with the understanding that it could not be returned.

Late in the afternoon, I carried the money to Celestine St. Marcellin, and the joy and gratitude she manifested were ample for my reward. The sum was more than she had even hoped for, and with the possession of the bright golden pieces came a sense of independence and immunity from want that raised her spirits immeasurably, for she was of a volatile disposition, bright and sparkling in joy, cast deeply down in adversity, and easily affected by the passing events of life. And yet, as is natural with such temperaments, emotions that once fairly reached the heart were not to be easily overcome.

From the cooper's I went to the mansion, where I found Cordelia Larkton sitting in her great easy-chair, while her mother, with her embroidery, kept her company. Mrs. Larkton arose, and I took the seat she had left, while she drew up another chair. Of course there was anxiety to know what I thought, and when I had told them, I added:

"But you owe little thanks to me. I have really done nothing. Nature has done the work, while the good Father in heaven has given a saving direction to her forces."

But the mother shook her head.

"I know we owe our gratitude to heaven, sir, but that cannot detract from the deep obligation we are under to you. I cannot put away the belief that you have saved our child. Had it not been for the courage with which you inspired her, even nature might not have accomplished its work. To us, sir, she was as one surely dying when you came air."

"And now," broke in the daughter, with a beaming look, "I am as one snatched from the grasp of the grim destroyer and restored to the joys and comforts of life, for I feel that life's comforts are yet to be mine. I feel better to-day than I have felt before for many months. I am weak, and there are some vestiges of pain in my side, but I know I shall soon overcome it all. Ah, doctor, you must let me thank you, and you must let me feel that you have saved me."

How could I refuse such a request? And when, a little later, she told me that I must come every day, how could I tell her that I could not. And yet I should have told her so, had not the mother urgently seconded the request.

"Yes, doctor," the latter said, "you must not neglect your patient until she is wholly well. If you will promise to come every day I shall feel easier."

I knew there was no need of it; but I could not refuse.

No need! But was there danger? Never mind. They call me, and I must attend. If my patient insists, then there is need of my going; for, to one so weak, and so recently lifted from the verge of the grave, even a simple disappointment might be harmful. So I told them I would come every day until she was able to walk out of doors.

(To be continued.)

FEMALE LONGEVITY.—The obituary of the Times of the 21st and 22nd April, contained some extra-

ordinary illustrations of prolonged existence in the case of twelve ladies, whose united ages amounted to 1012 years, giving an average of exactly 84 years 4 months to each. The oldest lady had reached the great age of 93, and the youngest 81 years of age. The same record also contained the deaths of four gentlemen, whose united ages amounted to 346, giving an average of exactly 86 years 6 months to each; the youngest was 80 and the oldest 87 years of age. Taking, therefore, the twelve ladies and four gentlemen, it will be found that their united ages amounted to 1349 years, giving an average of 84 years and rather more than three months to each.

SEVENTY-TWO YEARS IN A WORKHOUSE.—A blind inmate of the Marylebone Workhouse, over 30 years old, has been seventy-two years in the workhouse. He is in his little sphere a remarkable personage, known the Psalms by heart, leads the singing in church, and never fails in the responses. A better behaved or more inoffensive inmate never passed a long life within workhouse walls. He knows every brick and stone in the place. His only regret is, that in his younger days the guardians did not teach him some useful trade. Although he has been bred in a workhouse, and has passed more than a full term of life there amidst workhouse associates, his learning and conversation are those of a man who has seen much better days.

MANUFACTURE OF COMBS IN ITALY.

The manufacture of combs in Italy is carried on principally in Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Neapolitan provinces. In Tuscany, especially at Florence, Leghorn, and Arezzo, they are made chiefly of ivory and bone. At Naples they manufacture excellent articles from the hoofs of bullocks and horses, and also from tortoise-shell. In Lombardy the manufacture of ivory and tortoise-shell combs is very limited, whilst on the other hand a great trade is carried on in combs of bone. Milan may be said to be the chief seat of this manufacture, supplying not only Lombardy, but the whole of Italy.

This industry has not been carried on this city for more than thirty years. Formerly there were only a few small manufactures, where this industry was carried on in a most primitive manner, and the produce was either bad or costly. At the present time there are two large manufactures of combs, occupying about two hundred workmen, and eight smaller ones, occupying from six to eight men each, and besides these are many artizans who work at their own homes for the manufacturers. The total number of workmen employed in this industry is about two hundred and fifty. In the other provinces of Lombardy there are several small manufactures. At Milan 4000 horns are used per week—that is to say, 208,000 horns yearly, representing the value of 150,000f. (3000L.) The total value of the production is estimated at half a million of francs (20,000L.)

The principal part of the raw material is purchased in the country, but some is obtained from South America, Brazil, Montevideo, and from Buenos Ayres. The refuse of the manufacture, such as the tips of the horns and the scrapings, are used by turners, and also are employed for manure for the cultivation of olives and oranges.

It is estimated that during the two days preceding the Budget about 300,000f. or 400,000f. was paid into the Bank on account of tea and other produce in expectation of some increase on the duty.

This advertisement appears in the columns of a contemporary:—"A lady of retiring habits, whose husband is dead, wishes to dispose of a small but muscular female child six months old. A captain of a ship or an elderly gentleman going abroad would be handsomely negotiated with. The child is fair, and of an engaging disposition, and has been well christened in a Protestant church. Satisfactory reasons will be given by the mother, having no farther use for it. By letter only." Talk of the Reform League—why that body is civilized and gentle indeed in comparison with this specimen of disposition of some of the Britons of the day.

This marriage of the Prince Achille Murat with the Princess Salomé de Mingrelia will be the occasion of a very costly expenditure. The wedding dress is to cost, it is said, more than 30,000f. (1,200L.), and a great profusion of diamonds is also spoken of. The young Prince of Mingrelia will place among the wedding presents of his sister the contract for the purchase and sale of the splendid hotel situated near the Park Monceau, and sold by M. Eugène Périère. Mingrelia, where the ancestors of the future Princess Murat reigned, is the ancient Colchis, celebrated for the adventures of Jason and the crimes of Medea, who, according to the legend, is the ancestor of the Mingrelian sovereigns.

MARGARET.

CHAPTER I.

A FINE stone mansion with Elizabethan columns gleaming white in the sunshine, and broad, hospitable windows thrown open to admit the air of a June morning. Willow Hall was situated on a little eminence, overlooking a shadowy tarn, whose shores were fringed with willows, which dipped their branches into the dark water with every breath of wind. The grounds about the hall had a southern slope towards the public road that, with many a tortuous but graceful curve, swept downwards to the busy city. From the upper windows of the hall the view was beautiful and extensive, taking in the mountains to the north, and the glistening spires of the city to the east, clearly defined against the range of blue hills which walled in the horizon at that point.

At the back of the house a spacious garden, well-kept and sweet with the odours of blossoming peach trees, reached even to the shore of the tarn, while a murmuring fountain, heavily carved in marble, rivalled with its dreamy music the warbling of the birds in the trees that were brokenly mirrored in its waters.

From the highway a gate, guarded by two crouching lions, opened upon the sweep of gravel leading up to the hall door through lines of elms, whose boughs met and interlaced, forming an arch of emerald above the avenue. Willow Hall and all its surroundings would have attracted attention among scores of elegant residences, and the stranger who saw it for the first time, invariably stopped to pay, with earnest looks, his heed of admiration. Its owner and present resident, Carl Hathaway, was engaged in mercantile pursuits, in which he was highly successful, and at the age of thirty-four he married Angela Stone, the daughter of a merchant engaged in the India trade.

Five years of peaceful wedded life were his, and then, at the cost of his wife's existence, a daughter was given to Carl Hathaway. As might have been expected, the affections of the bereaved husband centred around this memorial of his lost Angela's love, and henceforth he seemed but to labour to win wealth, that he might surround the child with luxury.

He named her Margaret; perhaps because he liked the name, but more likely because the picture which hung in his library, with the glass for ever covered with sable crape, bore that name carved on the gilding of the frame.

Margaret Hathaway grew up as gentle as she was beautiful. A maternal relative—a woman of refinement and education, but widowed and childless—had the sole charge of Mr. Hathaway's household, and to her judicious care the training of the child was committed. Her charge was faithfully performed, for Mrs. Weldon was a person of rare good judgment and practical sense, and under her management, little Margaret bade fair to develop into a virtuous and beautiful womanhood.

A flourishing academy located in the vicinity of Willow Hall, precluded the necessity of Margaret's leaving home to pursue her studies, and at the age of seventeen, she graduated with the usual honours of such institutions. She was a thorough, rather than a brilliant scholar, and her acquirements were more useful than ornamental.

About the time of her exodus from school, Mr. Hathaway began to be visited by a middle-aged, though still attractive-looking gentleman, Kirke Rothsay, who owned a country seat a few miles from Mr. Hathaway in England, which was the mother country of them both, and on learning the present residence of Mr. Hathaway, he had hastened to renew the bond of friendship which had formerly existed between them. And it appeared that he was cordially welcome, for he was treated with uncommon distinction, and it was well known that even the stranger who came within the gates of Willow Hall had no reason to complain of neglect.

Inexplicably to herself, the youthful Margaret regarded this man with aversion and dread, which she strove hard to conceal, for it was her father's pleasure that Mr. Rothsay should receive the respect and attention of the entire household.

Perhaps she disliked him because he had fallen into the habit of fastening his eyes upon her, for hours together, when he was engaged in conversation with her father, and whenever he found her alone, he lost no time in assuring her by words, as well as looks, of his admiration of her beauty.

Courtesy to the guest of her family prevented her from answering his flattering speeches with rudeness, but she learned to tremble with apprehension at the sound of his footsteps, and to dread intensely the soft, musical tones of his voice in the ante-room.

Yet Kirke Rothsay was deemed handsome, wealthy he certainly was, and of a proud family; his manner was suave, though self-possessed, and his bearing was dignified and manly. He was now about forty-five, and his clear complexion, brown hair unthreaded by a single line of white, and smooth forehead, gave you the impression of a much younger man.

Margaret was sitting at the bay window of the drawing-room, her work in her lap, and the winds of the bright June morning lifting the soft tresses of her hair from her temples. Her dark hazel eyes were looking over wood and meadow, across the river, and the distant city, at the blue hills where the snow-white morning vapours lay like a pall of silver. She was thinking of the great world which toiled and groaned beyond those circling hills, of the busy marts of commerce, of the strife, bustle, and turmoil of men eager for wealth, of the grand, mysterious ocean, bearing upon its troublous breast the golden-freighted argosies of a hundred climes. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed—she longed for once to cast away the restraints of home, and home life, and go forth to mingle in this, to her, untried world. But presently the door was unclosed, and Mr. Hathaway looked in.

"Margaret, my daughter, I desire your presence in the library."

What was there in the simple enunciation of that request that should blanch the old man's face, and make his lips quiver like those of one in a spasmodic slumber? And why did the same cold pallor and the same trembling seize upon Margaret, as she rose to follow him? What subtle analysis shall explain the strange sympathy, by which the emotions of one human being so work upon and influence those of another?

With a premonition of evil at her heart, Margaret followed her father through the long passage until they halted before the library door. With his hand on the lock, Mr. Hathaway turned towards her, and the two gazed into each other's faces, silently and mutely as we look into the eyes of the dying, hoping to read there the unuttered mysteries which we so dimly comprehend. It was some moments before he opened his lips to say:

"Margaret, the next hour will, probably, try the affection which you have ever professed to entertain for your father to the utmost. And, remember, that on your obedience to his wishes depend the wealth, the honour, ay, the very life, of Carl Hathaway!"

He opened the door, and she followed him into the apartment, which had never seemed sombre or gloomy to her before.

It was a lofty chamber, with hangings of dark green velvet, and a gorgeous carpet of green leaves on brown ground, deep, luxurious easy-chairs in nooks at the end of the marble table, richly-wrought tapestry rustling over the heavily-arched windows, and articles of *virtù* scattered here and there in lavish profusion.

The veiled portrait threw a shadow over the magnificent appointments of the room—it hung there grim and gaunt—the skeleton of a dead hope; the "handwriting on the wall."

On a velvet *fauteuil* at the eastern window, the sunlight haloing his fair forehead, sat Kirke Rothsay, a smile of assured content on his face, and a gleam of confident victory deepening the brilliancy of his eye.

He rose on Margaret's entrance, and placed her tenderly in the seat which he had vacated, and then leaning against a statue of Diana, his eyes wandered over her beautiful face. She, with eyes cast down, and lips and forehead as white as newly-drawn snow, sat motionless beneath his gaze, her hands clasped over her knee, her soul fully conscious that the decree of destiny was gone forth against her.

Mr. Rothsay seemed to take peculiar delight in that long gaze which never wavered, which drank in thirstily every charm of that white neck, arching down to the faultless shoulders, the curling chestnut hair, and the still, Madonna-like features.

Mr. Hathaway had sunk into a chair, and with his head on his hand, he watched the twain with breathless anxiety. At length Rothsay spoke:

"Margaret, I have bidden you hither to tell you that I love you!"

She gave a quick start, and the blood surged redly over her face. Perhaps she was indignant, perhaps surprised. He continued his quiet gaze, and finding her indisposed to reply, he went on:

"You think me abrupt; you will urge in extenuation of the refusal which you will give me, that I am old, and therefore unsuited to your youth. Age can never extinguish the fires of a heart like mine, and for every year that I have lived beyond the span of your existence, the power is given me to add another strand to the cord of love which binds my heart to yours!"

Still she made no answer ; she did not even look up to meet the eyes which he fastened so pertinaciously upon her, but sat cold and still as marble.

" Margaret," he went on, " I have expected opposition ; I am prepared for it, but it will not shake my purpose ! Not the floods of the deluge, nor the watery powers of the ocean, could quench this passionate love which burns for you in my breast ! It will never be stifled—it will seeth there for ever. Not time, nor circumstance, shall free you from it. You might cross the seas and become a denizen of the wilderness, where the foot of man has never penetrated, and my love would find you out and still possess you. Nor life, nor death, Margaret, shall have power to take you from me ! "

His eyes sent forth their fire into hers, so cold and steel-like, but they brought no answering light. She was calm and impulsive. Mr. Hathaway's impatience could brook quietude no longer. He started up and came towards her.

" Margaret," he said, hoarsely, " for the love of heaven, speak. Mr. Rothsay expects an acknowledgment for the honour of the alliance he offers you. Give him your hand, my daughter, and your promise. You will assuredly be his wife ? "

" No, father ; " she lifted up her head now, and rose from her seat, " I would rather die, and lie by my mother's side. Heaven forbid that I should plight my faith, when my heart revolts at the thought ! "

Mr. Rothsay's face expressed no emotion of displeasure at her words—he was as assured and confident as ever.

" Margaret, you do not know what you say ! " cried Mr. Hathaway. " I could convince—"

" Father, I never can be aught to Mr. Rothsay but a mere acquaintance ; an unfamiliar one too, for I dislike him—nay, more, I detest him ! Let that satisfy you both. No man would wish to marry a woman to whom he was an object of loathing."

" You mistake, sweet Margaret. I would dare your hatred a thousand times to make you mine, and rejoice at the bridal ! Your scorn is dearer to me than the love of any other woman. Your hatred charms me—I would take it, and you, into my heart, and go mad with happiness ! "

He stooped to clasp her hand ; she drew it away with a haughty gesture.

" I have answered you ; let there be no more words on the subject, for here I solemnly declare—"

" Forbear ! " exclaimed Mr. Hathaway, raising his hand to invoke silence. " Margaret, you know not what you are doing ! You are strong in your self-will ; you will yield nothing until you know all ! And it shall be told, though my pride be humbled, and my manhood crushed in the dust ! "

He took the amazed girl by the arm, and leading her into a small study which adjoined the library, closed the door behind them. They were closeted together a full hour, but what passed between them was not revealed. Mr. Rothsay, calm and smiling, seated in an easy-chair turning over the leaves of a book of engravings, gave no heed to the low sound of voices on the other side of the partition. Once only he started up, as a short, quick cry fell on his ear. He seemed deeply agitated, and he put his hand easily to his forehead.

They came forth at last, the father and daughter, but one would scarcely have recognized Margaret Hathaway in the white-faced, crushed woman, who sank down wearily on an ottoman, and buried her face in the cushion of a chair.

Pity and love struggled together on Rothsay's countenance.

He rose drooping, and going towards her, lifted up her drooping head, but she drew away from him as if he had been a serpent.

" Kirke Rothsay, " she said, in a voice from which every trace of gentleness was crushed out, " for my father's sake—for the sake of averting the exercise of that power which you hold over him, I will become your wife. I will bear your name, and render obedience to your reasonable requests. But heaven witnessing with me, I will despise you to the day of my death ! "

He folded his arms strongly about her, even as though she had uttered some words of passionate affection, and sought to press his lips to hers. But she slipped from his embrace, and retreated to the most distant corner of the room.

" No more of that, Kirke Rothsay ! Your touch is withering to me ! Keep your distance, as I will keep mine. I have given you my promise to become your wife, but I will have no caresses at this unblest and unholy betrothal ! "

Strangely enough, the man did not seem moved ; he was still calm and smiling. He opened and held the door for her when she passed out, bade her good evening in his softest voice, and stood looking

down the hall after her, until the door of her chamber shut her in from his view.

CHAPTER II.

MR. ROTHSAY desired an immediate marriage, and Margaret did not demur ; events must take their course ; she had made no struggle against fate—she would not begin now. And towards the close of the month of roses, there was a bridal in the old church at the foot of the common, and Willow Hall and its master were left desolate ; their sunbeam had gone forth to brighten another home.

High Rock, the bridegroom's seat, received the newly-wedded pair, and then Margaret began to realize fully the extent of the sacrifice she had made, to preserve inviolate a secret which her father would rather die than have revealed.

Mr. Rothsay followed her about like her shadow. He was never content out of her presence ; he watched her as watchfully as the miser his choicest treasure.

If she spoke, he answered her ; if she moved, he was by her side, with his tender, unobtrusive attention to her comfort, and his solicitous care. She never went out after sunset but he was close by, with a thick shawl to shield her from the damp ; she must not go to the door with uncovered head, lest the dews should chill her, and he would not allow her to walk for five minutes, for fear it might fatigue her.

He stood constantly between her and all harsher contact—he sought zealously and continually to make her lifepath one carpet of thornless roses. In a thousand ways he showed his love and care, but his attentions only made her the more unhappy.

Coming from the one whom she loves, attentions like these are precious to a woman, and half the bliss of her life depends upon them ; but to Margaret's unloving heart they were ashes and bitterness. She shrank from her husband's touch, grew unconsciously white in his presence, and experienced an ineffable sense of relief when he left her, if but for a moment. And this singular aversion was not induced by anything tangible, by anything evil which she knew of Kirke Rothsay, but by that subtle, mysterious instinct that attracts or repels us, whether we will or no.

August was drawing to a close ; the middle of September the Rothsays were to go to their town residence, and then Margaret's life in society would begin. Mr. Rothsay looked forward with pride to the sensation her rare beauty and grace would produce, but she anticipated only another form of unhappiness.

A letter requiring Mr. Rothsay's immediate presence, gave the unwilling wife the prospect of, at least, a brief respite from her husband's society. He was extremely averse to leaving her, he bade her a tender adieu and departed.

He had not been gone two days, before Margaret, accompanied by Katy (a faithful woman whom she had brought from Willow Hall), took long walks over the mountains ; the bodily fatigue, which resulted from the unwanted exercise, stifled the pain at her heart, and anything was better than uninterrupted thought.

And one afternoon, when the air was thick and palpable with intense heat, she stole off unawares, leaving Katy asleep on a couch in her chamber, and took the path to the mountains. She cared little whither she went, for life to her had lost all charm. And heedless of everything, save the turbulence of her own heart, she walked on.

A gloom, as of the approach of night, was creeping over the earth, the fresh south wind fell to a dead silence, not a leaf stirred, not a blade of grass quivered.

Looking neither upwards nor downwards, to the right nor to the left, Margaret hurried along, until at last she reached the entrance of a defile, which some time or other the autumnal storms had ploughed in the body of the mountain.

It was green and mossy there, and she sat down to rest. With her forehead on her hand, her memory busy with the events of the last few months of her life, she sat motionless, unmindful of the dense blackness which curtained the west, and shut up the sun in a shroud of sable.

The low roll of distant thunder did not arouse her attention—if she heard it, she fancied it was the rumble of a neighbouring cascade.

Nearer and nearer came the black cloud, the wind leaped terror-stricken from tree to tree, clouds of dust filled the air, the thunder bellowed hoarsely forth its threatenings from the strong battlements of the sky, and the vivid glare of the lightning lit up the rocks and crags into more than noonday splendour.

Frightened and bewildered, Margaret sprang up to look around her, but before she could advance a step

the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain fell in a blinding sheet. A thunder tempest had always possessed for her unaccountable terror, and now, alone in this dreary place, she was overcome with affright, and, feeling weak and helpless, she sank back on the ground.

There was a quick step at her side. She turned to greet the new comer, for at that moment she would have welcomed the companionship of man or beast. A stranger was standing near her, who gave one rapid glance around the defile, as though calculating the resources of the place, then catching her up in his arms without ceremony, he bore her into a sort of grotto, formed by the shelter of an overhanging rock. He opened his shawl on the ground and seated her upon it, while he himself stood erect between her and the open part of the cave.

A consciousness of content, instantaneous with the appearance of this man, a content large enough to take in the troubles of the whole world, and count them naught, filled Margaret's breast. There was no word exchanged between the two so suddenly brought together. She leaned against a supporting rock ; his form shut out from her shaded eyes the incessant flashes of the lightning, and, as it were, stood up between her and danger. She felt no wish to look up at him—she knew not whether he was old or young ; she only knew that since the days of her childhood, when her tired head had sought repose on her fond father's breast, she had not found so sweet a peace as that which now possessed her.

There was a hush in the storm ; the rain ceased, the wind moaned angrily among the crags, nature was indulging in a long breath. Suddenly a broad, terrible flame of fire illuminated the earth, accompanied by a peal of thunder so terrific that the very foundations of the mountains trembled. The great tree which had guarded the entrance of the grotto was rent in twain from branch to root, and broken fragments of its verdure were hurled to Margaret's feet.

She shuddered and shook at the nearness of the destruction, but her lips did not move to utter the cry which sprang to her tongue. Her companion was watching her. She was content to sit there, for this new presence, unknown and unforeseen, yet fully recognized, was sufficient to her. At last he spoke, raising her head up to look :

" See, the storm is over. Heaven has set its promise, a crimson girdle in the sky."

He led her to the mouth of the grotto, and together they looked out on the drenched landscape. The sun was struggling through masses of silver-gray vapour, and in the far-away east a faint bow spanned the dark cloud which had drifted there. The west wind blew coolly from the upper heights, the trees were jubilant with birds, and the fragrance which floated from the revivified flowers was like an offering of incense to the Spirit of Mercy that had sent the gracious rain.

And, for the first time, Margaret, on turning away from the contemplation of the face of nature, glanced up to meet the eyes she knew were gazing upon her. She saw a tall, finely-formed young man of about five-and-twenty, his complexion bronzed by exposure to other suns, his soft brown hair lying in masses of tangled curls around his forehead, which was white as snow in the centre of an untroubled drift. His eyes, deep, black and fathomless, met hers with a fulness and fervour which caused her very heart to stand still from a stifling sense of joy.

All her life long she had dreamed of meeting a gaze like that—an unshrinking, passionate gaze, from eyes that she would be content to have always beside her, drinking up the light and brilliancy of her own. Now the ideal had become a reality. And her whole being was stirred by the recognition.

The stranger conducted her down the steep path. She turned to go—he pressed on ; each ignorant of the other's name and history, but better acquainted in spirit than many who have dwelt for years in daily companionship.

To paint the emotions of Margaret Rothsay when alone with her own thoughts would be impossible. She had met the being whom she had long felt was walking apart, sad that he had not found, in all the world of fair women, his counterpart—the one designed by heaven to perfect and fashion his happiness.

He had wandered restlessly, and he had waited hopefully, trusting always that some time or other their life-paths would cross and mingle together in one broad track, which it would be pleasant to travel.

And now they had met and recognized each other. Spirit had conversed with spirit, heart had spoken to heart, and that was all ! Life stretched out before them, blue and black ; their roads lay in different ways—but the end, thank heaven, the end of both was on the shore of the same eternity !

The evening was calm and starlit. Margaret

went down after moonrise for a brief stroll. The stranger was there before her. At last he spoke:

" You recognize me. I you. My heart knows and claims its rightful mate, and even thus does your heart acknowledge me. Is it not so?"

The conscious mounting of the crimson to her cheek, which flushed very red in the clear moonlight, answered him. He continued:

" And I know, also, that an obstacle intervenes between us. I read it in the tremulous affright of your eyes when they meet mine, in the hopeless sadness that hangs like a veil over the face which should reflect only joy. Tell me all about it. I have a right to ask. What is this obstacle?"

" It is marriage," she replied, mechanically, for his manner forced the explanation from her against her will.

A cold pallor came over his face.

" It is as I had feared. You do not love the man to whom the ceremony of the church has united you, because you belong wholly and entirely to me. For years I have had a sense of your existence in the world, for years I have wandered in search of you. I knew not under what form or feature I should find you, but I was certain I should see and recognize you on this side of the grave. Alas, that my success should come too late!"

" Too late!" echoed Margaret, in a hoarse voice. " Ah, yes, too late!"

The stranger gazed long and wistfully into her face. He was taking a last look at the only woman who could crown and make his life perfect. He thought so, then; perhaps he was right. He stopped in his hasty walk, and took her cold hand in his.

" You are at no loss to guess that I am a fatalist," he said; " a believer in an inscrutable and unchangeable destiny. You, too, agree to the same creed. Therefore, we both know how worse than useless it would be to combat fate, though it should condemn us to misery, and make our lives a blank. What is our duty?"

She looked up into his beautiful face, with an expression of countenance as high-souled and noble as his own.

" My conscience must be clear," she said, in a calm tone; " and for this we must part, with no hope of meeting again, this side of heaven. I will be faithful to my husband, and you will not seek to shake my faith! I trust you entirely!"

" And your trust is safe. I will not even kiss the lips which the law of marriage has given to the caresses of another. I will be true in deed, if I cannot in thought. And now, that we are about to sever, by what name shall I call you when we are at last united?"

" Margaret—let my family title be to you a myth; did you know all, your pure heart might be tempted!"

" And I am Horace—"

They stood side by side, both looking into the distance, as though to read what farther revelations were written of their fortunes in the dark book of fate. She held out her hand, at length, as if wearied of the vain search after the future. He took it reverently in his.

" Adieu, Horace."

" Adieu, Margaret."

The pain and passion of those two hearts swelled forth in the simple words, like a wave which bursts forth over a resisting barrier, only to fall back baffled and torn; there was no other token of their trial and triumph, save the depth and despair of the low tone in which the farewell was uttered.

(Concluded in our next.)

MURAL PICTURES FOR THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.—Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., has completed three more of the illustrations of English History confided to him, and has lately shown them to some of his friends in the trumpery shed which an appreciative Government provides, adjoining Victoria Tower, for distinguished artists. The subjects are,—"The Acquittal of the Seven Bishops," "General Monk Writing to the Parliament," and "William and Mary receiving the Lords and Commons in the Banqueting House." They are painted with all the careful attention to truth and research as to detail that distinguish Mr. Ward's works. The heads are portraits, and if King William look somewhat insignificant, and Monk short-necked and gouty, it is because these were characteristics of the men. We need scarcely say that they are all works of high character. They may be described at present as simply water-colour pictures on plaster. The question how shall they be made permanent remains to be settled. The artist, we understand, would not object to fixing them as they are, and protecting them with a glass, but this is scarcely the right solution of the question. It might, however, be adopted temporarily, pending further inquiry and experiments.

GENTLE LEONIE.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE afternoon, a week subsequent to the day on which Lady Laure Fontenier received the letters from her father and the Duke d'Aumale, she was surprised at the arrival of the latter at Dame Lobeau's cottage door. She was seated in the little porch covered with vines and blossoms, and playing with the little girl of her old nurse's widowed daughter. The child was fair and innocent, and its winning ways had quite won the heart of Lady Laure, since she had been an inhabitant of the cottage, so that she often toyed and played with it for hours at a time. Now the little one was playing about her feet, catching at the long fringe and tassels of her light summer shawl, and then roguishly hiding herself from Lady Laure behind the seat she occupied, to come forth quickly again, and hold up her little hands for her to take her up and caress her.

It was a very pretty tableau—the Lady Laure, in her white dress and blue silk shawl, her dainty slippers peeping forth from beneath the folds of her white drapery; her fair hands and taper fingers looking like the stamens of a lily, and her beautiful face wreathed in smiles, as she gazed on the child with fondness and love. Her dark tresses fell in waving curls about her shoulders; her eyes were brilliant and sparkling; and her rose-bud mouth half parted with pleasurable emotions, as she caught up the little one and kissed her.

Just at the moment when this scene was being enacted, an elegant travelling barouche came up the highway, and stopped before the gate of Dame Charlotte Lobeau's cottage. And, as the noise of the horses' hoofs on the hard road, and the wheels of the barouche, fell upon Lady Laure's ears, she turned to behold the Duke d'Aumale just alighting from the vehicle. She started up with sudden agitation, nearly dropping the little girl from her lap. Then, as the nobleman came up the garden walk, passing through the gate which his position held open for his ingress, she stood with pallid countenance waiting to receive him. The little girl darted quickly into the open door; for she was affrighted at the coming of the stranger in his carriage, and attended by the servants with him. So she quickly disappeared within the cottage, and Lady Laure was left alone to receive her unexpected and unwelcome guest.

The Duke d'Aumale advanced up the path and stood before Lady Laure. She did not hold out her hand in greeting; and the duke stood there, with his eyes bent upon her pale face, searching for the cause of this cold reception. No word came from her lips, and his own voice broke the silence, as he asked, in somewhat stern language:

" Why do you receive your future husband—the Duke d'Aumale—so coldly, Lady Laure? Are you surprised at the unexpected visit I pay you, and is this the cause of your frigid manner? If so, I can overlook it; for I have come without warning, and it would naturally surprise you much. But I am come to take you back with me, and I trust that you will gladly leave the little hamlet, amid whose quietude you are fast losing your freshness and grace; for I perceive that your features have lost their bloom, as well as your manners their courtesy and easy polish," said the duke, as he made excuse for the coolness of her greeting to himself.

Lady Laure felt herself forced to reply, though her heart sank within her, when her visitor announced his intention of taking her back with him. But she steadied her voice as much as possible, though there was not the gladness of sound which the duke would have liked to have listened to. She spoke, saying:

" Your arrival has truly surprised me, Duke d'Aumale. From the letter I received from you and from my father, I supposed you were now away in a different direction; therefore you should not be vexed with me for not giving a speedier greeting. I am glad that you are well, and hope that no evil fortune has brought you so quickly hither. I trust that my father is not suffering in health, and so sent for me. If this be so, tell me the worst at once, and not keep me in painful anxiety a moment longer?" said the lady.

" I left Count Fontenier as well as usual," replied the duke. " But, equally with me, he desired to see his daughter sooner than either of our letters to her a few days since testified. I have myself given up the proposed journey, which I mentioned to you in my letter was to take place, at this time, in another direction than the one I have come to-day. I have now hastened to you, to take you back with me as quickly as you are able to be ready. The work upon my chateau is now awaiting your commands as to its further progress. Your father, therefore, when I stated the case to him, desired that I should come for you, as I proposed to him to do. I have hastened hither,

then; and now, Lady Laure, shall await your readiness to set out on the return journey," said the duke.

" I am honoured by your kindness and consideration in thus coming for me, and deferring to my taste and judgment in the modelling of your chateau, Duke d'Aumale; and I would that you had not done so, for I know nothing of such matters, and should not presume to dictate in this instance, even did I believe I was capable of so doing. You are the one who should make all changes and additions, as suits your own pleasure. Therefore, do not consider that I wish, or should be happy or gratified in deciding upon the subject. But let me remain quietly here a short time longer, for I have grown to love the cottage home of my nurse—worthy Dame Charlotte—very greatly."

But the Duke d'Aumale could not think of the matter thus. Though Lady Laure had not received him with the cordiality which he would have liked, yet he attributed it to the unexpectedness of his visit. He had come to take his betrothed back with him; and could not for a moment think of returning without her. So he replied:

" I have come down expressly for you, Lady Laure. Your father wishes your return, and my workmen await your orders; therefore, I cannot go back without you. I am gratified that you have found this a pleasant place of sojourn during the time you have been here. I perceived that the little child with you was a favourite, and imagine that you have found new feature to the other attractions of this charming little cottage," said the duke.

" Little Lulu has made the cottage much pleasanter to me since being here, for she is a sweet little thing," replied the lady. " But will you not enter, and become acquainted with the other inmates—my worthy nurse and her daughter, the mother of the child?"

" Little Lulu has made the cottage much pleasanter to me since being here, for she is a sweet little thing," replied the lady. " But will you not enter, and become acquainted with the other inmates—my worthy nurse and her daughter, the mother of the child?"

" I will not come in now; but will return, in less than an hour, and be with you. Now I shall enter my barouche and drive to the hostelry, to see what lodgings can be obtained for the night, and as long as I remain here, till you are ready to depart. Adieu till I return, an hour hence, Lady Laure!" With these words, and raising the lady's hand gallantly to his lips, the Duke d'Aumale went out of the gate which his postilions sprang down to open for him, entered his carriage, and was driven away.

CHAPTER X.

THE following morning, Lady Laure went out for an early walk. The Duke d'Aumale had come to Dame Lobeau's cottage the evening previous, as he had announced his intention of doing. Lady Laure received him with reserve and dignity in her manner, which chilled the warmth and lover-like tenderness of his own towards herself. So, after a brief visit, which was not very satisfactory to him, the nobleman departed for the little hostelry, thinking that the absence of his betrothed had not been calculated to increase the warmth of her affection for himself. But, at the same time, the Duke d'Aumale had no true suspicion of the full change in Lady Laure's feelings towards him. He supposed her cold, and perhaps embarrassed, because some time had elapsed since they had met; and he anticipated, that, when she beheld how great had been his endeavours to please in the arrangement of their future home, her manner would speedily change; and she would become not only less cold, but affectionate and delighted with himself and the chateau. He therefore consoled himself with these thoughts, and went back to the hostelry, to pass the night in undisturbed repose of body and mind.

Lady Laure had pleaded that she might remain a few days longer. She wished greatly to complete a sketch which she had commenced of some picturesque portion of the scenery around; and the duke had kindly and gallantly consented to remain till she had finished the picture. So upon the morning following, we find the lady, with her sketch-book in her hand, hastening out to resume the picture.

The spot which she had chosen for her work was an old mill which had fallen to decay. Matted vines and bushes were thickly clustered about the old decaying walls; and thick grass had sprung up in the path which formerly led to the building, now out of use. A stream, romantic and pleasant, babbled along under the ruined mill, whose wheels were once turned by the running waters. Willows and hazels grew thickly along the bank of the river farther down, revealing glimpses of the beaming, sparkling waters between their spreading branches. It was a wild, romantic spot, suggestive of reverie; and Lady Laure had come hither many times since being in the hamlet, sometimes alone, but often of late accompanied by Leonore Moreau, the pleasant companion of her hours of sketching and rambles. The last visit of the two had been on the morning of the previous day. Both had taken their pencils and

sketch-books, and worked in mutual pleasure at the task of transferring a copy of the old mill and its surroundings to their canvas; and they had separated with the understanding to meet there again upon the following morning to complete, if possible, the sketch.

Now, Lady Laure hastened to the spot with mingled feelings within her breast. It might be the last time she should go out to sketch in the hamlet, and probably it would be the last she should meet the handsome young artist, whose company had grown so pleasant to her. She trod the path leading from the highway to the ruined mill, with these thoughts in her breast, and paused in her walk only to seat herself upon a rough log, which had been left beside the building. For some time she sat in deep thought, forgetting the object which had brought her thither, letting her sketch-book and pencils fall away from her lap, and lie unheeded upon the grass at her feet. Her thoughts were as yet confused. She was not fully aware of the state of her heart, only of an intense longing to remain where she was, in the pleasant cottage of her old nurse Charlotte, and allow the Duke d'Aumale to return without her. Could this be done? She did not think it possible; for the duke, though he had ever been kind and considerate to her before, she felt now would be obdurate, and remain until she accompanied him to her home. The task of visiting his chateau, and looking about with the purpose of expressing her desires as to its future manner of completion, seemed to her repugnant and uninteresting. She had no heart in it, but, on the contrary, would, oh, so gladly! be released from doing so. But her father had willed it; to him then she must give obedience, though suffering and unhappiness were the results to herself.

With these feelings in her breast, Lady Laure sat absorbed in unpleasant reverie, so deep that she did not observe that the companion of her sketching hours, Leone Moreau, came up the grassy path and stood near her. He was about to break the silence, and bid her a happy "good-morning," when she soliloquized sadly, but firmly:

"Yes, I must return to Paris immediately. My father desires it, and the Duke d'Aumale would not overlook it, if I refused to accompany him back. I must go then; and this morning must be the last that I come to sketch in this pleasant nook, which I have found so charming. I will tell the duke, on my return to Dame Charlotte's cottage, after he pays his next visit to me, that I am ready to depart with him to-morrow. I will finish the sketch this morning, and then bid adieu to this place for the last time as Lady Laure Fontenier. Possibly, when I have become the Duchess d'Aumale, I might come here to find rest and repose from the gay life I shall be forced to lead; but it would not be to me as now, for unhappiness would sit more deeply enthroned upon my heart, and this peaceful scene would perchance only bring back the remembrance of the pleasant hours I have passed here during this visit. But I must not give way to regret them nor now. I must finish the sketch, to take with me." And with these words, Lady Laure picked up the pencils and book which lay at her feet, and then rose to commence her work.

Leone Moreau advanced now, and stood at the side of the lady. He would have spoken, and apologized for overhearing her conversation, but Lady Laure interrupted him by extending her hand, with a happy smile coming upon her features, while she said:

"*Bon jour, mon bon ami!* I am glad that you are here, for I was beginning to grow meditative and sad; but your coming will rouse me for the task I set out to accomplish, to finish sketching this old mill. You have brought your pencils, too, as you promised; and I think that we shall be able to complete the work this morning. I wish greatly to do so; for I may not be able to come again, as I set out for Paris to-morrow, to return to my father's chateau."

Leone Moreau's face did not change colour at this announcement. He had heard it but a moment previous, as he unwillingly listened to Lady Laure's thoughts uttered aloud. Then there had come a swift sudden pang to his heart, and his face became as pale as ashes. But the lady's words showed him that she too was loth to leave the hamlet; that happiness did not sit enthroned upon her heart, when she thought of becoming wedded to the Duke d'Aumale. He was silent then, because he perceived that she was disturbed, and, he fully believed, unhappy. Yet she was bound to wed one high in rank, a nobleman of power and unbounded wealth. What had he to say to that? He, a poor widow's son, an unknown artist, without rank, wealth, or name? Nothing!

So Leone Moreau, for that time, though sorely tempted, stifled all the words which rose to his lips, and did not utter them. He only came and stood

beside Lady Laure, unfolded his sketch-book, and took his pencils, ready to begin his morning work, while he said calmly:

"I think you will be able to complete the sketch this morning. I will assist you, and you can take it to your home when you return to Paris."

There was no surprise evinced by his tone. The two went quietly to work; and, some hours later, Lady Laure's sketch was complete.

CHAPTER XI.

LADY LAURE returned to the cottage of Dame Charlotte, after bidding Leone Moreau good-morning when they gained the point of the road where their paths diverged. The young man walked on to his home in a wretched state of mind; but he had heard sufficient of Lady Laure's conversation to know that she was the betrothed of the Duke d'Aumale, and that he had come to convey her back. The lady parted with him at the turn of the road, saying:

"I shall probably leave here to-morrow, or the following day at farthest. My father has sent for me to return; and a friend has come to take me with him back to Paris. I shall miss the charming quietness of this pleasant rural village, and the happiness of sketching with you, *mon ami*. This will be our last week together; I shall remember it, and all our charming rambles, with many pleasurable feelings. Should you come to Paris to prosecute your studies, then remember that Count Fontenier's chateau is ever open to you, and that he and his daughter will be happy to welcome you to it."

Leone Moreau heard the words of Lady Laure, as she uttered them in a tone which she rendered calm by a strong effort. He observed that her lips were a little tremulous, and that she did not look full into his face. But he felt that he must not seek to probe her heart. She gave him now the place of a friend. He had no right to ask for any other; so he gave his leave in parting, as he replied, with a voice equally as calm as her own:

"I am honoured and gratified by your friendship, beautiful Lady Fontenier. Your stay in Troyes has been productive of much happiness to me, and I shall miss you greatly when you have departed. You have loved the art in which my soul takes delight. You have condescended to favour me with a share of your company while here, and the pleasure, to me, has been very great. When you have returned home, it will be a source of gratification to me to know that you look back with pleasant thoughts upon your sojourn here. Should I ever come to that city, as doubtless I may, when my mother consents to my going to learn more of painting with the great masters there, then I shall remember your kind invitation, and will avail myself of the honour of meeting and conversing with you once more."

"I shall see you, then, some time again. But I must leave you now. It is growing towards the hour of noon, and I shall be expected back at the cottage. Farewell, then, for the present, till I see you in Paris! Farewell!" and Lady Laure's hand trembled a little in his clasp, while her voice was low and tremulous.

Leone Moreau, though seeing these signs of agitation, was too honourable to avail himself of any licence, which perhaps another would have taken in his position. He only added his adieu to hers.

"Farewell, Lady Fontenier! We may meet again. Time will tell. But, should this parting be a final one, then accept the best wishes of my heart for your future life. May it be one of happiness and prosperity, is my earnest desire! May God bless and keep you ever, as one of His chosen few!" and, with these words, uttered in a heartfelt tone, the young man took the road leading to his home, while Lady Laure returned to the cottage of her good nurse.

Arrived there, Lady Laure quickly ascended to her own apartment. She was agitated and restless. Her features were flushed, and her dark eyes filled with unusual brilliancy. She threw herself upon a couch, and spoke her thoughts aloud:

"Why do I feel so wretched at leaving this place?" she questioned. "Why does my heart shrink, and my form grow agitated, when I say to myself I must go away. My father is there, awaiting the return of his daughter, with happy, eager thoughts. The Duke d'Aumale has kindly come to take me back thither. He has delayed an immediate return because I expressed the desire to remain longer. He is generous and noble in this, and in wishing me to be pleased with the magnificent home he is preparing for me. But yet I am unhappy! I cannot take any interest in the approaching preparations for my wedding-day. I love not the bridegroom. I can never grow happy, or even content. I love him not,

and yet I have promised to wed him during the approaching winter. But I must not let my father imagine how distasteful this union has become to me, for he looks upon it as the best match in Paris for his child. I will shield the true state of my heart from the gaze of both him and the duke, and become the bride of the latter at the appointed time."

Then she paused for a moment, and, rising from her seat, went to the window covered without by the thickly twining honeysuckle and jasmine vines, and looked out upon the surrounding country. The cottage was situated upon an eminence, and commanded a view of nearly the whole hamlet, and the road leading away in the direction of Paris. On this road was the romantically located home of Leone Moreau and his lady mother.

She could perceive, even now, the figure of the young man approaching his home. His tall, manly form, and noble bearing, struck her more sensibly at this moment than it had ever done before. She gazed a few moments upon him, as he went up the path, and then disappeared within the house; then she turned away with a sigh, and involuntarily her eyes gazed in the opposite direction towards the hamlet, whose houses lay sheltered by the numerous elms and poplars of the village.

The Duke d'Aumale was just leaving the little hostelry, and his face and steps were bent in the direction of Dame Charlotte's cottage. He was coming to pay his morning visit to his betrothed.

The Lady Laure quickly drew back from the window, and a look of pain and gloom overspread her features. She had just behind Leone Moreau—the unknown artist, without name and position—and the Duke d'Aumale, one of the most honoured noblemen of France. Her heart now lay open to her view, as it suddenly flashed upon her, that, had she the power of choosing her lover, it would be Leone Moreau, instead of the Duke d'Aumale.

Lizette entered the room at this moment. She saw the gloom upon the lovely countenance of her mistress, and, as she passed the open window, beheld the approach of the nobleman.

"My lady is troubled this morning. She is sad at leaving this charming little village. She would rather remain here than return to Paris just now. Is it not so, *ma chère* mistress?" asked the girl with a tone of sympathy.

"Yes, Lizette. I am truly sad in thinking of returning to Paris again. But it is best, and we must set out to-morrow. I shall tell the Duke d'Aumale this when he arrives this morning. It is certainly not right to defer our departure longer. We will go, then, to-morrow; and Lizette, let everything be in readiness, that we may leave here at an early hour," said the lady.

Lizette looked at her mistress a moment in silence; then she spoke out suddenly, with an impetuous tone:

"My dear mistress, this ought not to be! You are acting against the true feelings of your heart. You should not marry the Duke d'Aumale; for you do not love him, and you do love Leone Moreau—the handsome young artist."

Lady Laure's face grew suddenly scarlet. She started from her seat with a mortified, indignant look.

"Lizette, cease to utter such language to the promised wife of the Duke d'Aumale! You are rude, and your words are insulting!"

But the pretty maid did not shrink away in awe at her mistress's unusual, harsh tone. She only went up and knelt before the indignant lady, while her eyes were humid with tears, and her voice tremulous with deep feeling, as she said:

"Oh, my lady! My dear loved mistress! I cannot see you unhappy, and not grow wretched myself. I could not help reading your feelings since you have been here. Leone Moreau has become dearer to you than any other on earth. You love not the Duke d'Aumale, and it is wrong to sacrifice your life to him and your sire. Rebel, then; and do not wed the duke. You should not marry him. Tell your heart, and he cannot wish it then. He will release you from your vows!"

Thus pleaded Lizette; and her mistress listened with newly-aroused thoughts, and did not reprove her maid.

CHAPTER XII.

FIVE minutes later Lady Laure descended to the parlour to meet the Duke d'Aumale. Her maid's parting words were sounding in her ears as she entered the room and gave her hand in welcome to her noble suitor. Her face was pale, but her mind was fixed in the determination to make known to the duke the true state of her feelings towards him.

The nobleman took the seat to which Lady Laure motioned him, saying, as he did so:



[LIZETTE SPEAKS OUT.]

"I am come to learn your time of setting forth on our return to Paris, Lady Laure. Shall it be as soon as to-morrow, or have you not yet completed the sketch of which you spoke yesterday to me?"

"I have finished the view. It was completed this morning; and I will show it to you, if you desire to look at it," replied the lady. "But, first, let me tell you the wishes of my heart with regard to my return to Paris now, and also with regard to my marriage with yourself. Will you listen to them, and promise not to be offended with me for that which I cannot help? I throw myself upon your generosity, and will tell you frankly how unsettled and unhappy is the state of my heart. You will promise not to be offended if I do so—will you not, my kind friend?" the lady asked, in somewhat tremulous tones.

"That I cannot affirm, Lady Laure. I have heard a story, while stopping at the little hostelry, which has caused me to doubt your fidelity to myself. I have heard how often, since Lady Laure Fontenier, my promised bride, came to Troyes, she has been seen in the company of a young artist living in some little home hereabouts—that the two have walked, talked, and sketched together—that both appeared oblivious of all else but each other when they were together. I have been told that the young man has nothing to recommend him but his good looks, and the little talent he possesses in drawing; but that Lady Fontenier seemed quite to forget this, and receives him as an equal and companion. Now, knowing this, I do not wonder that you should be loth to depart from here—that you should make excuses to remain, and receive the devoted admiration of this brave young lover, who has taken your kindness so much to heart, and made himself agreeable enough to cause you to wish to remain here, and, perchance, annul your contract with myself. But I am ready to listen to your words now, Lady Laure. Let them be concise, and to the point, for I fear I have been too lenient and tender with you already, that you should thus have betrayed my confidence, and sullied the honour of our existing engagement."

The nobleman's face was flushed, and his manner abrupt and stern. Lady Laure had never beheld him thus before, and she now witnessed this new phase in his character with mingled feelings of indignation and alarm. But she replied, as soon as he had finished:

"Duke d'Aumale, you are labouring under a false impression concerning one whom you call your promised wife. You do both her, yourself, and another, injustice by listening to the idle tales of a village gossip. You have said that I have given this

young man—this artist, who is indeed as noble a youth as dwells in France—the right of a lover towards myself. It is untrue. But, as you are mistaken, as you thus appear to wish to believe it, I am almost tempted to allow you to credit the tale. In justice to Leone Moreau only, will I say that he never, by word or look, has betrayed that he cared for me other than as the companion of the hour. He is as noble as he is talented, and I honour him above all men, Duke d'Aumale. You now know the state of my heart towards him, though he has never hinted that such a feeling would be reciprocated by himself," said Lady Laure in a firm, unwavering tone, and with a womanly dignity of manner which the Duke d'Aumale had never witnessed in her before.

Now the nobleman hardly knew how to answer. His betrothed had openly avowed that she cared for another.

He had thought that the young man, emboldened by her kindness towards him, had endeavoured to win her love, and he feared that his artful words and fascinating manner might have won upon her heart to such a degree as to make her unwilling to leave Troyes immediately.

But he was unprepared for the startling revelation which had just fallen upon his ears, and he looked at Lady Laure's flushed face and sparkling eyes, with a surprised expression in his own flashing dark orbs.

But he quickly found courage to reply again, and, now, sternness was in tone and manner:

"You are very kind and generous to take the whole of this love affair upon yourself, Lady Laure. Did I credit your tale, it would be, to my ears, even worse than that I heard at the hostelry. But I am obliged to discredit it in a measure; for I can but think that this young man, whose name, by the way sounds marvellously familiar to my ears, has had his share in the sentimental task of love-making. You would shield him because your own heart is interested. But I can view his conduct in no other light than as a vile pilferer of the rights of another. But this matters not now. You will return to your father with me immediately; where you will be safe from any advances which the low-born fellow might make, should he be able to reach your ear. When you are within my own home, then I shall feel sure that you cannot be approached by him, or any other, who should chance to look upon your countenance with motives dishonourable to myself. You will proceed to make the necessary preparations to depart immediately. To-morrow morning we will set out on our journey," uttered the nobleman, in a stern, decided manner.

"Duke d'Aumale, you are now as unkind as before you have been kind towards me. You doubt my

words, which are as true as any that I ever uttered. What I have said regarding Leone Moreau is true. You would believe them, could you see the pure, noble features, which at once stamp him honourable in the eyes of the beholder. Oh, Duke d'Aumale! you are harsh and cruel; and you cause me now to dislike you, when before I had only pleasant thoughts of your kindness of heart and noble manners!" said Lady Laure in a saddened tone of voice.

"Leone Moreau—you say this young man's name is Leone Moreau?" questioned the Duke d'Aumale with sudden interest.

"Yes, that is his name; and he lives in the beautiful little cottage down in the valley. He is a fine artist; and I met him one morning when I went out to sketch his home, which looked so pleasant to me that I wished to transfer it to canvas," said Lady Laure. Then she added: "If you knew him, you would immediately become interested in him, for he is as handsome and courteous as any nobleman in Paris. His mother is a true lady, I know full well, though she has no title appended to her name. But she is fair, and has the manners of one once accustomed to good society. She has a sad face, with blue eyes, and hair yet unturned by time, though I should judge she was nearly as old as your highness. But what ails you, Duke d'Aumale? Your face is pale, and you are suddenly ill. Let me call Dame Charlotte; for you are very pale and trembling!" and Lady Laure sprang towards the door to call for assistance.

"Return, Lady Laure," he gasped out, with quivering lips, and in broken words. "Return, and close the door. It is only a sudden attack of pain, which sometimes comes upon me. But I shall speedily recover from it." Then he added: "You were speaking of the lady and her son; go on, and tell me more, for I am interested in all that concerns you, my child."

Lady Laure proceeded to relate to him all she knew of Madame Moreau and her son, Leone. She spoke of the morning she had first called there—of her mentioning Paris as her home, and the lady's sudden emotion, and her own supposition that Madame Moreau had once lived there; and also that, once since then, the lady had inquired after several noblemen living there, her father and the Duke d'Aumale amid the number.

The Duke d'Aumale listened with his face turned from the narrator. As she closed her narration, he said, under his breath:

"It must be her; and her son has become my favoured rival!"

(To be continued.)



[DOCTOR BROWN'S EXPERIMENT.]

HONYCHURCH ROOKERY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

You might have heard a pin drop in that crowded court, on the pleasant September morning when the opening evidence for the prosecution was introduced, and the trial of Charlie Creyton for murder commenced. Doctor Brown was not far from right. The gallery, and even the floor, was crowded with listeners from Cranstown. One after another the witnesses came forward, and link by link the chain of evidence was forged, starting even the most pre-judiced by its apparently indisputable strength.

John Ward had seen Charlie Creyton cross the field, at the back of the highway, and take the track towards the lake and the hermit's cottage just after twilight. He could swear to his statement without the slightest wavering of doubt.

Michael Donovan and James Griggs testified that they were hurrying towards the cottage, having been the first men sent thither by Wilson and Briggs, after their discovery of the murder, and that, coming through Farmer Grey's wood-lot, they almost ran over Charlie Creyton, who was going away from, instead of taking the road towards, the cottage. Close cross-questioning elicited only, that while both had the impression that some one was with him, neither was willing to take oath to that effect. The circumstance had not made any impression upon them at the time, because the lake was a favourite resort of the young people, especially on moonlight evenings; only upon the arrest of the prisoner did the incident take significance. Then came a hired workman from the shop, to tell of his calling the prisoner's attention the next morning to a small twig of oak leaves curiously twisted around the button of the skirt of the prisoner's coat, as though he had forced his way violently through some close-matted shrubbery, and wrenched it from the branch. He noticed at the time his employer's look of annoyance and confusion, as well as afterwards his keen interest in the account of the meagreness of the clues discovered by which to identify the unknown assassin.

There was a little dispute between the counsel for the prisoner and that of the prosecution, and then the testimony went on; the examination of the witnesses was resumed.

Poor Ben Crump was the next witness. He cast one glance of anguished entreaty for forgiveness towards the grave, pale face rising over the prisoner's box, and then lowered his eyes, and never raised them again, until he was called to look at the pistol and

identify it. The poor fellow did his best to say barely the truth; but he knew, when he sat down, amidst a low murmur, that his evidence had been most damaging, thus far, of any introduced.

The counsel for the prisoner made an effort to confuse him, but, at an earnest gesture from the prisoner, desisted.

On the second day, the evidence for the prosecution was concluded, by the proving of the finding of the gold and the pistol; the cashier of the Worcester bank having already given in his testimony concerning the payment of such money to a man whose peculiar dress and appearance made easy identification of the hermit.

If the court had been filled before, it was packed now to its utmost capability. There was a dead, ominous pause when the announcement was made that the testimony for the defendant could now be introduced.

The prisoner's lawyer, nervous and anxious, gave a swift, inquiring glance towards his client.

For the first time, Charlie Creyton's courage seemed to waver. He gave a searching glance over the sea of faces; found many familiar ones—his mother's, Doctor Brown's, even Miss Anderson's, but not the face he sought.

The lawyer, who had at last received his whole confidence, bent down to him.

"Is he here? What shall I do?"

"Anything to make delay, to gain time," whispered Charlie's white lips. "Heaven grant I have not been deceived!"

And so witnesses were brought forward to prove the hitherto irreproachable character of the accused, and among them, his mother.

Never had Mary Creyton looked so calm and grand, as now that she advanced towards the witness-box. Her face was pale, but composed and sweetly tranquil, and there was a soft, shining light in her eye, which was new, even to her son. Her hands were folded across a small book, which was pressed tightly against her breast. She was conscious that the first words falling from her lips would send a thrill from the prisoner's box to the most distant seat in the gallery. Not even the lawyer, nor her son, was aware of the deep significance of the revelation; and she knew, likewise, that now was come to her the long, long, delayed acquittal, the proud refutation of the disgrace she had endured so patiently. No wonder there was that high, solemn look on her face.

From her cushioned seat near the gallery door, Miss Anderson saw and read that expression, and there passed a cold, steely gleam across her eyes, and

she set her white teeth into the crimson lip, with savage determination, muttering under her breath:

"I will fight her down. I will deny it to the last!"

"Mary Creyton," called the officer of the court.

The slender, modest figure in its black dress, with its calm, uplifted face, moved forward, and was sworn.

"Please, your honour," began the clear, unfaltering voice, "let me begin with the truth. My name is Mary Creyton Livingstone."

There was a dead silence, in which was heard the rustle of some lady's silken dress from the gallery, then a low murmur rose, and swelled louder.

"Will you make your statement again?"

"My name is Mary Creyton Livingstone!"

"It is false!" was uttered in a deep, hoarse voice of concentrated rage and desperation from the gallery.

Doctor Brown laid his warning hand on Miss Anderson's shoulder, and whispered:

"I told you this was no place for you. I will not answer for the consequences of any excitement."

She gasped once or twice, and sat down again.

The counsel for the prosecution rose.

"Will the witness please to state how she obtained such a name, when she is known in all her native town as an unmarried woman, bearing her maiden name of Creyton?"

"My name was Mary Creyton, until, twenty-two years ago this month, I was married to George Livingstone, the nephew of Edward Livingstone of Cranston."

The faces of the Cranstown people were every one of them worthy an artist's study.

The lawyer for the defence brightened, stooped down, and asked something in a low voice.

"If you desire proof, Mrs. Livingstone has her marriage certificate with her," he said, the next moment.

The priceless document passed from Mary's hands up to the bench. While the judge was reading it aloud, the mother turned towards her son with a glad, heart-thrilling smile.

Charlie had risen instinctively, grasping at the rails of the box, and never stirring his eyes from the judge's face.

"The certificate has certainly the appearance of being genuine. Proof can readily be obtained, since the reverend gentleman whose name is affixed to it, is still alive, and only a few miles from us, if there be any question raised concerning it," said the judge.

Miss Anderson had been rapidly pencilling a few

lines on a card she took from her pocket-book. Mr. Atherton made his way out of the gallery, through the crowd, down into the packed assemblage below, and presently handed the card to the prosecuting lawyer.

He read it, and announced that the sole surviving relative of George Livingstone denounced the assertion as an infamous attempt at imposture, declaring her intention to contest the matter to the extent of the law.

Mr. Atherton's persistent efforts to clear a way to the front had made room for another person, a man wrapped in a long, thin cloak, with a hat pressed down closely over his brows. This man quietly followed behind him, and at last made his way so close to Mary, that, by reaching forward, he could touch her elbow.

"Please your honour, does this question interfere with the farther testimony of the witness?" asked the lawyer for the defence.

"It certainly will render her evidence worthless, if it be proved she has spoken falsely here before us, after her solemn oath."

"It is not necessary to delay for this trifle," said a deep voice, startling the judge, jury, and, most of all, the prisoner and witness. "The reverend gentleman is in the court. Let him come forward."

Mary stepped aside, still with the calm, heroic forgetfulness of the gazing eyes; and in the moment the clergyman, too well known not to be recognized by half the people there, came forward, and corroborated her testimony. It was his first marriage, and all the particulars were written down in the yellow volume of the journal he brought with him.

Mary Creyton Livingstone was vindicated. The Cranstown people looked at one another with rueful and crestfallen glances. Charlie was trying to hide the scalding tears pouring over his cheek, and only Doctor Brown perceived that Miss Anderson sat with hands clenched, and eyes burning like those of a tiger ready for a fatal spring.

"Let the testimony for the defendant go on," said the judge, when the long murmur of astonishment had somewhat subsided.

The stranger who had called for the clergyman put himself forward, made an expressive gesture, and passed a slip of paper along to the lawyer.

The latter opened it, flashed a triumphant glance towards the prisoner's box, and said, in a voice which vainly endeavoured to be calm:

"I shall decline farther testimony from that witness. There is but one other to bring forward, and his testimony, I trust, will be found conclusive. I assure your honour, had he been at hand, he should have been brought forward in the commencement of the trial. My client is here arraigned at this bar on the grave charge of murder. I fear, indeed, from the testimony offered, there is scarcely a soul here but solemnly and sincerely believes in his guilt. But behold! I call for my next witness—the Hermit of the Lake!"

Well might these words occasion a profound stir throughout the crowded court, and well might the low murmur of astonishment swell into a loud huzza, when the stranger, below Mary Creyton, threw off his hat and shrouding cloak, and stood up before them—the well-remembered figure with long gray locks, his venerable beard, and dreamy face.

Couroner Bradley rubbed his eyes vigorously, and stared as if under the influence of a dream. The judge removed his glasses, polished them hastily, and took another sharp survey. Through it all, the hermit stood up there in the box of witnesses, exposed to all eyes, and the focus, certainly, of every glance in the room.

A second shout rose up, as Charlie Creyton turned his white, grateful face towards him, and he looked up fearlessly to the jury. Through that shout came the low, wild shriek of a woman's voice. It did not proceed from Mary Creyton, for she was standing there with clasped hands, trembling at last like a very aspen, unable to articulate a single syllable.

Doctor Brown knew from whence it came, and he bent down towards the frozen-looking face beyond him, and touched Miss Anderson's shoulder. But she gave no response. She was bending forward, her whole vitality seemed to have passed into her eyes, which were burning luridly, and were fixed upon that bold figure in the witness-box.

Order was restored with difficulty. The whole audience seemed swayed as by an irresistible wave of emotion. But at length quiet was enforced, and the voice of the judge himself could be heard. "Swear this witness, and let him explain how, and why, we have been deceived into believing a murder had been accomplished."

"Please your worship, the fact of the murder still exists. Shall I give my testimony in my own words or wait for your honour's questions?"

"Give the account to the point, if possible, but in your own statement. And first your name?"

"George Livingstone!" was the clear and prompt reply.

Another shout, wilder than the first, and the low cry which mingled with it was not from Miss Anderson.

"George! George!" cried Mary Creyton's sobbing voice.

He turned upon her one yearning, overflowing glance of adoring love, but made a gentle, deprecating gesture.

"There can be proof brought forward to substantiate my statement. There are half-a-dozen people in Cranstown who can identify the peculiar birthmark on my arm. If that be not sufficient, I can bring forward, in due time, ample proof from abroad, that I am that George Livingstone who went forth from hence twenty-one years and more ago," said the new-comer, steadily turning his face again to the judge.

"But why have you remained concealed all this time? How dared you impose upon your native town that statement of your death?" demanded the counsel for the prosecution, who was a native of Cranstown, and acquainted with all the facts.

"The statement did not come from me, nor through any agency of mine," answered George Livingstone, steadily. "I will presently show you through whose nefarious agency all this has come about; but first let me ask you to hear the true account of the murder, which occurred at the cottage by the lake. May I ask that the late prisoner be allowed to make his statement concerning what he knew and saw?"

The judge whispered a moment with the gentleman beside him, and nodded assent.

"Charles Creyton," said George Livingstone, "be pleased to tell us, then, where you were on the evening of that murder?"

"I was at the lake shore, but a short distance from the spot where the cross is now placed over the grave."

"You went thither for what purpose?"

"In answer to a mysterious promise you gave me on the day previous, a promise to help me out of many threatening evils."

"You had a companion?"

"I did; the same promise was given to her. You gave us both the gold, for whose fatal possession I had nearly lost my reputation, if not my life."

"The lady's name is unnecessary, since her illness prevents her immediate corroboration of this testimony. But where were you when the cry for help rang forth from the hermit's cottage?"

"Below the banks, with the lady and yourself. We had kept silent for a few moments, because we heard a boat come up to the landing some distance below us, and as the trees concealed from us who it was, we retreated out of sight. We heard the cry and the pistol shot, and hardly knew what to do; but, as we were hurrying out, a figure dashed past our hiding-place, and went down towards the landing. Although the moonlight was so bright, the bushes concealed from us the identity of the assassin. You seized me by the arm, and exclaimed:

"That pistol-shot was intended for me. Haste to the cottage and give what relief is possible, but I must follow the murderer, if murder has been done."

"We went together, my companion and myself, and found a stranger lying there in the cottage, just breathing his last. We had hardly discovered this when you came back. You told us that it was imperative for your safety, that the murderer should believe the work completed. You gave us a hurried promise to protect us from all harm, extorted our sacred word to keep silence on what we had seen, gathered up all proof of your identity, and hurried us away from the cottage, just as we heard the footsteps of the woodmen brushing along through the bushes of the pasture. I was the more ready to yield to your guidance, because I was overwhelmed by finding the assassin's pistol, lying on the floor, to be the very weapon I had lost mysteriously from my shop the week before. You gave us a solemn promise to protect us from any injurious result, again assured us you were the only one to help us out of our difficulties, and led us by a safe and speedy pathway to the road."

"Precisely; there are three, then, to swear to the truth of that statement?"

"But the man who was murdered, and the murderer, who are they?" demanded the bewildered lawyer.

"The man who was murdered was an acquaintance of mine, not an agreeable one, I admit. He saw me as I was drawing my money that day at the bank, and followed me. He had motives of his own for coming from abroad to Cranstown, and insisted upon sharing my cottage for the night. Poor wretch, it was his death-warrant. I left him stretched out on my bed to rest himself from his long tramp, and went to keep the appointment I had made with this

young man and his companion. The moment I heard the cry and the pistol report, I knew what it meant. I had been all the time on my guard against a malignant and merciless enemy—the same one whose diabolical machinations drove me from my uncle's love and my rightful home—that one who would be most likely to suffer by my re-appearance. More than that I need not say."

"And the name of the man who sleeps under the cross?"

"Julian Raymond was his name. I speak the truth, so hear me, heaven!"

The words were scarcely uttered, than there rang out a terrible, heart-rending cry, that almost stopped the pulse of every heart present.

"No, no! it is false! It cannot be!"

"It is the truth. Heaven's truth!" answered George Livingstone, turning round towards the gallery.

"Miserable woman! you murdered the father of your child, and you left the hated claimant to the Livingstone fortune safe, unharmed, ready to come forward thus in judgment against you."

Across the sea of pale, awe-struck, horrified faces, George Livingstone's eye flashed its accusing glance into the glazed, stony orbs of Serena Anderson.

"Your plottings are ended, turned upon you in terrible retribution. My wife is cleared of all shade of blame, my son will go forth free and honoured, and I myself stand ready to prove my rightful claim to the estate you have so wrongfully withheld," he cried out in a stern, accusing voice.

Miss Anderson stood there, the great lady of Cranstown, in the rich satin dress trailing behind her, the costly lace mantle, and scintillating diamond earrings, with a face that was like that of a fiend, in its white rage and baffled fury. Slowly the change came over it. Doctor Brown marked it well, and sprang towards her. The eyes gleamed red and lurid, the lips were drawn convulsively from the white teeth, a terrible look of horror, terror, inexplicable loathing, passed over the whole countenance, and holding up her right hand, glittering as it was with its gemmed circlets, she shrieked:

"The evil one has done it. It is this hand, this terrible hand. Ray, Ray, where are you? Come to me. Do you not guess why I love you so? Oh, Ray, Ray, you are my son. And now I can never marry your father and save you from the disgrace, because I have killed him. Julian, Julian, it was not I, it was the fiend, the terrible fiend in this right hand."

The tone had grown wilder, and the words came swifter. She ended with a burst of mad laughter, that rang for days afterwards in the ears of the shuddering listeners.

Ray Gilbert, only a little way behind her, heard every word, and understood, as the dullest brain in the whole assembly could not fail of doing. He turned deadly pale, cast one sickening glance at the wild maniac face, and dashed from the gallery, the court, the very town itself.

Doctor Brown waved away the officers of the law, as they hurried towards the gallery.

"Leave her alone. Heaven's judgment has dealt with her already. It is no pretence. This has been coming on for months. I looked for it without this exposure. She is quite mad, and will never be a sane woman again."

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE was a perfect Babel outside the court, when the prisoner came forth free, with his mother on his arm, and his triumphant father, at last recognized by many as the identical George Livingstone of Lakeville, following behind. The long gray locks of the hermit and the venerable beard were removed, which changed the character of his face.

Austin Bradley came up to Charlie, and held out his hand with a look of mingled shame and annoyance.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Charles Livingstone, from the bottom of my heart, upon this great and happy change in your fortunes, and beg you will bear me no ill-will for my share in your prosecution."

"Certainly not, Mr. Bradley," replied Charlie cheerfully, as he shook the offered hand; but it was quite another smile with which he turned to Doctor Brown, when the latter came back from seeing the unfortunate patient to safe lodgings.

"Doctor Brown, my mother has been telling me of your kindness, and I have heard from other sources of your generous defence, when everything showed so darkly against me. And may I ask your opinion about Amy, my generous noble Amy?"

"It is all right now. A few whispered words of what has happened here, such care as she will not fail of receiving, and a sight now and then of your happy face, and you may pack the doctor and his medicines off upon some other victim. Now I want a

look at your father. We were wild lads together, and I ought to know him. Ha!" added he, as he saw the gray wig and beard dangling from the late hermit's hand, "so you have turned masquerader, George Livingstone!"

The latter held out his hand with a grave smile.

"I think my whole life has been a wild, foolish masquerade, doctor. I am longing to come now into peace and quiet. I cannot even retain the bitter anger I have hitherto cherished towards that woman——"

"You can afford to be generous, even in your forgiveness of so great a wrong. You have your fortune back again; and let me tell you, if you think such a wife and such a son as those who will form your sweetest happiness, could ever have been reared amidst the luxurious and enervating scenes of Lakeville, you are vastly mistaken. Tried, purified by fire, they come to you with the stamp of genuine gold. But will you please look at the Cranstown people? Poor, deluded gossips! they hardly dare venture forwards, though they are longing to offer incense at the new shrine. Are you going at once to Lakeville?"

"No. Even were there no legal formalities to be settled, I should prefer Creyton Farm. I presume you will take her—Serena Anderson, I mean—back to Lakeville."

"No. She must go to the asylum. It is the only safe place for her. I have been expecting this as I said before. You know she has been under my care for some time. Her madness will be furious and dangerous. My dear sir, you do well to put away your vindictive anger. Look at the case, and see if, in your wildest hate, you could have asked for more terrible retribution. Think of how she has queened it over these people; think how jealously she guarded that secret of Ray Gilbert's birth, even from the lad himself, and then remember how there, before that crowded court, she was so thoroughly and terribly exposed. No wonder her mind gave way at once. And even that anguish is nothing in comparison to this which she must continue to suffer—this frightful dread of her own right hand, which she believes to be changed into that of a torturing demon. Perhaps you have not been familiar with insanity, and do not understand how exquisite is the suffering of such a belief?"

"Heaven knows I would save the wretched woman from this doom, if it were possible," answered George Livingstone, earnestly. "How can I be thankful enough that my own dear wife had a staff to lean upon, through all her sorrows, so that neither mind nor body gave way beneath the trial!"

"Just so, just so!" echoed Doctor Brown, earnestly. "George Livingstone, I tell you that woman is a pearl of price. More than ever does it impress upon me my old theory, that a woman without religion is more worthless than a flower without perfume."

Half-a-dozen carriages, at least, were waiting at the service of the Livingstones, to carry them to Cranstown. Charlie looked along upon the row, and with a quiet smile, accepted the rather forlorn hired equipage of Ben Crump, who coloured to the very roots of his hair with delight and gratification.

The arrival at Creyton Farm, and that almost solemn meeting there in the privacy of home, was too sacred for common description.

There were many things still untold even, when Charlie rose, and began to look longingly towards the village. Mary Livingstone left her husband's side to whisper:

"Go and see how she is, Charlie dear. I caught a glimpse of Mr. Atherton's face, and if ever a man in the world was thoroughly humiliated and crestfallen, it is he. There is no question about your welcome now from the master of the house, and for sweet, faithful Amy's sake, we will forget how much we despise such summer friends."

Charlie kissed her tenderly, smiled in return to his father's proud and happy glance, seized his hat, and went away.

"There is only one thing more," observed Mary, gently, as she came back to her husband's encircling arm. "I want the taxidermist to come, and rejoice in your restoration to life, and your rightful inheritance. It touched me deeply, George, to see how truly he loved you."

George Livingstone went to the hall, where hung the old gray cloak, put his hands into the pockets, and came back laughing.

"I never thought I should need to explain that to you. The doctor was right. I have done little but masquerade. Mary, dear, you may guess now how trying that interview was for me. But I had taken a solemn oath to reveal myself to no one, until I saw my way clear to the proofs against Serena Anderson."

While he spoke, he fitted the jetty moustache to his lip, placed a black wig upon his head, and bowing, said, in the imperfect accents of Max Steinberg:

"My dear mad'm, I wish you joy from the depths of my heart, this be the happiest day of my life."

"George, George! how could I be so blind?" cried Mary between her peals of laughter.

"Little wife, do you remember how coolly you sent me away from your window that night, because you were alone and unprotected! Could I not have fallen down at your feet, and kissed the very dust beneath them! The doctor, that shrewd, clear-sighted man, is right again. You are the pearl of women."

Charlie, meanwhile, with great bounds of exulting freedom, had gone dashing across the pasture towards the village. He answered the respectful greetings which met him everywhere, as he passed along, but paused for none, walking straight on towards the Atherton Cottage.

His heart was brimming over with sweet and tender memories. That dark, wretched morning before the justice in the lawyer's office, was still before his thoughts. He saw the pale, sweet, agonized face, and heard the wisful, earnest voice:

"I have come to give my testimony. To save Charlie, or to share his fate."

His brave, faithful darling! Sweetest of all this new happiness, was the remembrance that she deserved all the reward he was at length able to give.

He walked up the avenue unhesitatingly, and laid his hand on the door-bell. But the door was noiselessly unclosed before him. Mrs. Atherton, with a tremulous smile, held out her hand. Charlie wrung it in silence. At the parlour door stood Graham Atherton. Never was there a face so thoroughly subdued, all its pompos importance passed away. He stood there dumb, conscience-stricken, for once in his life conscious of the poor, mean, miserable part he had acted.

It cost Charlie Livingstone a slight struggle before he could advance, as he did, presently, with extended hand.

"Mr. Atherton, I hope you will agree with me that it is wisest to leave bygones to be bygones. I have come here, not, I hope, without your approbation, to see my promised wife. Mrs. Atherton, will you let me have a single look at Amy? The doctor thought there would be no harm, if I kept composed, and gave my good news cautiously."

"Certainly, certainly! Show him up to Amy, Maria. I must say, Mr. Livingstone, this is generous and magnanimous," began Graham Atherton.

But Charlie turned hastily to the mother.

"Let us go on," said he, in a whisper.

Mrs. Atherton led the way, and, opening the chamber door, showed him the thin, white face, with its dreamy, listless eyes, resting amidst the pillows which filled the back of an easy-chair, into which they had raised her. The long, silky hair was waving around her shoulders, and the weak, thin hands were playing with it as a child might have done. The whole face was vague, indefinite, unfixed.

Doctor Brown sat in the chair before her, and the nurse waited in the shadow of the bed-curtains. They had relied on his coming, and were waiting anxiously the result of the experiment. Charlie's heart beat suffocatingly. He had hardly been prepared to find her so weak and changed, and yet had never yearned towards her with such passionate tenderness, as now that she lay there before him like a blighted, drooping blossom.

Mrs. Atherton obeyed the doctor's significant glance, and coming forward, knelt down before the chair, and looked up into the listless eyes.

"Amy, darling, I have good news for you."

The girl turned her eyes slowly towards the trembling, anxious speaker, with just the faintest possible shade of recognition flitting across her face.

"The trial is ended, Amy, and Charlie is safe!" continued the mother, clutching her hands to keep down the tremor of agitation from her voice.

A little quiver across the lips, a widening of the pupils of the eye at the name.

Mrs. Atherton saw it, and repeated it again.

"Charlie Creyton is cleared, Amy. The hermit came forward, and saved him! Are you not glad for Charlie?"

The eyes grew troubled, the face lost its calm, and she broke into a slight tempest of sobs and tears, taking her hands away from their feeble playing with the long brown tresses, and wringing them pitifully, as she repeated, slowly:

"Charlie! oh Charlie!"

Mrs. Atherton turned her frightened eyes towards the doctor, but he motioned for her to continue, thankful to find that memory could be aroused at all.

"Charlie is safe, Amy, the trouble is all ended."

"Has he been hanged, mother?" demanded Amy, in her own voice, her eye beaming suddenly with intelligence.

"No, no, Amy! he is safe!"

The doctor's authoritative voice brought Charlie

forward. He fell down upon his knees, and caught both her hands, covering them with tears and kisses.

"Amy, my darling, my precious, precious Amy!" was all his agitated voice could articulate.

Amy sat a moment perfectly motionless, her eyes dilating, slowly taking in the meaning of his presence. Then there came a slight cry of mingled joy and pain, and she fell forward into the arms he outstretched to receive her.

The doctor came forward, smiling triumphantly in the midst of their horror, as mother and lover looked wildly into the cold, white face and closed eyes.

"The shock is over! the body has borne it, and the mind is safe. Help me take her to the bed, and let all be as quiet as possible when she revives. As for you, young man, don't look so despairing; I tell you all the danger is past. Remain within call, and you shall hear her speak naturally, remembering everything that transpired before her illness. I tell you the crisis is safely over."

The worthy doctor was right. From that hour Amy Atherton improved steadily, and a few days after the Livingstones took possession of Lakeville, she was able to ride in the luxurious carriage which had once been so hateful to her eyes, sent especially that she might be the first to offer her congratulations. Charlie drew her aside with tender care, selecting the easiest couch in the peerless purple room, and calling her a fairy sprite who had stolen into the place of a Cleopatra.

"Rest quietly, Amy darling, if these cushions are easy, and I am going to entertain you with a pretty show."

As he spoke, he brought forward sundry square packages, neatly enveloped in embossed paper, and tied with white satin ribbons. Some were very small, and some were almost as large as a travelling-trunk.

With a mischievous smile on his face, Charlie's laughing fingers untied the dainty knots, and flung open the lace papers of the inner envelopes, swinging back the lid of a pearl and silver casket, and showing the brilliant scintillation of imprisoned diamonds. Then he sank down on one knee before her, and his playful tone grew deep and earnest.

"They have just arrived, Amy, from the famous London artiste, the answer to Miss Anderson's order Amy, my darling, they were intended to bribe your consent to a bridal at Lakeville. Will you take them, little Amy, from my hands, and come, only bribed by love, for love's sweet sake?"

I don't think Amy's answer could be recorded, nor am I certain Charlie Livingstone knew what it was.

For while he still knelt, the little hand in his own, the fair head resting on his shoulder, there came a sharp cry outside the door.

It was Mrs. Ewing's voice.

"Have you heard the news that's come? Miss Anderson is dead."

"Dead? Miss Anderson dead!" ejaculated Felice, with an interjection of astonishment and horror.

George Livingstone and his wife came in presently to repeat the horrible story.

"It is better so," said George Livingstone, breaking a long and solemn silence. "Her sufferings, at least, are ended. Let us remember only the diseased mind, and drop a veil over her misdeeds and evil passions. I wish I could find that boy of hers, and lend him a helping hand."

But Ray Gilbert was not so easily found. The terrible downfall alike of his pride and magnificent prospects, changed his whole character. He who had been only a selfish, idle dreamer, a luxurious enjoyer of enervating ease, was transformed into a sternly practical self-acting man. Cranstown was the most abhorrent of all places in the world to his sensitive spirit, and it was several months after—in fact when Charlie and Amy were on their bridal tour—that, in a distant town, they came across Ray Gilbert.

He coloured deeply as he recognized them, and made a desperate attempt to avoid them. But Charlie was not so easily baffled. He laid a firm hand on the young man's shoulder in the crowded street.

"Ray, my father is searching for you. I shall not let you escape me now. We must be friends, Ray, and you must allow me to give you what assistance lies in our power. Promise me that you will accept it."

The young man was deeply touched by this generosity, but still more impressed by the earnestness of the interest in his welfare. At first, all intercourse with them was extremely painful, but the time came when, established in a prospering business by the generous help from Lakeville, he was ready and glad to acknowledge them as near and dear friends.

It was by his order that, years afterwards, when

happily married, and in comfortable circumstances, he was able to trace back much of his improved character and worthy success to the darkest experience of his life; a simple stone was erected over the grave of Serene Anderson, bearing a design entirely mystical to a stranger, but thrillingly suggestive to all who knew the dark story of the life of the silent sleeper beneath.

Sculptured on the marble above the shield, bearing simply the name and age of the deceased, was a pair of exquisitely carved hands. The right was lying dismembered, severed at the wrist, but the left was pointing upwards. Beneath, these lines:

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee!"

THE END.

DR. LIVINGSTONE.

THE news of the safety of Dr. Livingstone received *vid* Dr. Kirk at Zanzibar has been confirmed by letters received from the distinguished traveller himself by his friends in Edinburgh. The letters cover a period from 10th November, 1866, to February 1st, 1867. On the 1st February he writes:

"I am in Bemba, or Lobemba, and at the chief man's place, which has three stockades around it and a deep, dry ditch round the inner one. He seems a fine fellow, and gave us a cow to slaughter on our arrival yesterday. We are going to hold a Christmas feast off it to-morrow, as I promised the boys a blow-out when we came to a place of plenty. We have had precious hard times, and I would not complain if it had not been gnawing hunger for many a day, and our bones sticking through as if they would burst the skin. When we were in a part where game abounded I filled the pot with a first-rate rifle given me by Captain Fraser, but elsewhere we had but very short rations of a species of millet called 'macra,' which passes the stomach almost unchanged. The sorest grief of all was the loss of the medicine box which your friend at Apothecaries' Hall so kindly fitted up. All other things I divided among the bundles, so that if one or two were lost we should not be rendered destitute of such articles; but this I gave to a steady boy, and trusted him. He exchanged for a march with two volunteers, who behaved remarkably well, till at last hungry marches through dripping forests, cold hungry nights, and fatiguing days overcame their virtue, and they made off with 'Steady's' load—all his clothes, our plates, dishes, much of our powder, and two guns, and it was impossible to trace them after the first drenching shower, which fell immediately after they left us."

"The forests are so dense and leafy one cannot see fifty yards on any side. This loss with all our medicine fell on my heart like a sentence of death by fever, as was the case with poor Bishop Mackenzie; but I shall try native remedies, and trust in Him who has led me hitherto to help me still. We have been mostly on elevated land, between 3,000 and 5,000 feet above the sea. I think we are now on the watershed for which I was to seek. We are 4,500 feet above the sea level, and will begin to descend when we go. This may be put down as 10 deg. 10 min. south lat., and long. 31 deg. 50 min. 2 sec. We found a party of black half-caste Arab slaves here, and one promises to take letters to Zanzibar, but they give me only half a day to write; but I shall send what I can, and hope that they will be as good as their word. We have not had a single difficulty with the people." In another letter also written to friends in Scotland, and dated Chitapangwa's Village, Bemba, Dr. Livingstone describes the event which no doubt led to the report of his death. "We have been a long time in working north to this, which is probably the watershed the geographers seek. We are some 4,500 feet above the sea, and the river Simapula lies in front of us. This is said to be very large, and flows into Lake Tanganyika, where we hope to be by May next. I have the anticipation of letters there and a fresh stock of goods. The Arabs all fled from me as if I had had the plague, and I could send nothing to the coast."

"We had to go a long way round about besides, partly to prevent my Johanna men from running away at the sight of danger, and partly because the Arabs were afraid that I would burn their vessels on Lake Nyassa as slaves. The Johanna men did at last bolt at the mere report of danger in front, and I went on and faced it with but nine Africans, six of whom are boys from a school at Bombay for the recaptured. The Johanna men were such a lot of thieves that it was a relief to get rid of them. We have since worked our way north till we are in a part blank on the maps. We got enough of meat in the lower lands by the rifle, but when we got up to the Highlands of the Babosa not an animal could be seen. The people, all scattered by their own slaving,

could sell us nothing. They lived chiefly on mush rooms, and, by trudging through dripping forests, over sloppy marshes, the feet almost constantly wet, and gnawing hunger within, most of the flesh came off my bones. Here the people have something to sell, so we get on better, and mean to rest awhile and recruit."

VESUVIUS.

THE following interesting letter from Mr. G. Grove is dated Naples, April 4:-

"For some days past Vesuvius has been diminishing in activity, and during the earlier days of this week hardly a sign of fire has been visible from Naples. Yesterday afternoon, however, the crater made a very satisfactory demonstration, which it was my good fortune to see quite close. We had heard several explosions as we came up the mountain, and had seen an occasional shower of sparks thrown up above the little crater, and these gradually increased until we had taken our stand. Then for more than two hours the hill above us continued to shoot forth an almost constant succession of explosions of brilliant burning stones. I hardly like to use the comparison, but I don't think I can give a better idea of it than by saying that each explosion was like a vast girandole of rockets, only that there was more speed about it, and more variety, owing to the different sizes of the stones shot out, and that there was more intense light at the first outburst than in the case of rockets. Flame there certainly was none; this we observed carefully; though the trails of the shooting stones and the illuminated vapour might almost excuse the word.

"The noise of the discharges was not a bang; it was a pervading sound, almost exactly resembling the waves on a beach and wind blowing through shrouds. It varied in intensity, but was nearly continuous, and of the character mentioned. The mountain trembled perceptibly enough during the whole of our stay, though not nearly so strong as it did during my Wednesday visit, when there was scarcely any actual explosion. It is impossible for me to calculate exactly, but I judged that there were from 1,000 to 1,500 stones in each great discharge, and there were often as many as eight or ten discharges in a minute. The majority of the stones were small—the largest, say as large as two bricks end to end. The large ones mostly fell back into the crater, but the small ones, being thrown higher, and more acted on by the wind, fell in immense numbers on the leeward slope of the small crater, and on the same side of the great cone beyond.

"To my mind, this was a spectacle hardly less striking than the discharges themselves; at any rate it was quite new to me. I have often heard it said that the cone becomes 'red-hot' under such discharges. But this is not an accurate description of what I saw. 'Red' is not the word, but 'golden,' and the cone was not covered even by these copious showers. The sight was far more beautiful than if it had been so. The crowd of golden spots on the dead black surface—the small ones generally resting where they fell, while the large ones rolled through them down the slope—and the constant change as shower after shower descended, made a variegated and beautiful spectacle such as was of itself alone worth the ascent. It formed a wonderful pedestal to the explosions which surrounded it, and which were naturally the great attraction. I could not calculate the height to which some of the small stones were thrown, but it was very great.

"There was generally one which went far higher than all the rest, and pierced upwards towards the moon, which looked calmly down, mocking such vain attempts to reach her. The larger pieces were, with rare exceptions, not thrown so high; indeed, many of them only just appeared over the rim of the cone, above which they came floating leisurely up to show their brilliant forms and intense white light for a second, and then subsided again into the abyss. The inference was inevitable that there were many still larger blocks which were not thrown high enough for us to see all. At nine o'clock we turned to come down, and after that nothing occurred but the ordinary incidents of the very disagreeable descent of the volcano over and through heaps of coke of the most jagged and wounding forms. The discharges diminished in frequency and fury, and when the carriage turned into the Chiaja and the mountain came into view, a very rare burst from the summit alone remained to tell of what we had been seeing."

WHAT IS A TEAR?—The principal element of a tear is water. This water, upon dissolution, contains a few hundredths parts of the substance called mucous, and a small portion of salt, of soda, of phosphate of lime and of phosphate of soda. It is the salt and the soda that give to tears that peculiar savour which

earned for tears the epithet of "salt" at the hand of Greek poets, and that of "bitter" at that of ours. "Salt" is, however, the more correct term of the two. When a tear dries, the water evaporates, and leaves behind it a deposit of the saline ingredients. These amalgamate and, as seen through the microscope, array themselves in long crossed lines which look like diminutive fish-bones. Tears are secreted by a gland, called the lachrymal gland, which is situated above the eyeball and underneath the upper eyelid, on the side nearest the temple. Six or seven exceedingly fine channels flow from it along and under the surface of the eyelid, discharging their contents a little above the delicate cartilage which supports the lid. It is these channels or canals that carry the tears into the eye. But tears do not flow only at certain moments and under certain circumstances, as might be supposed; their flow is continuous. All day and all night (although less abundantly during sleep), they trickle softly from their slender sluices, and spread glistening over the surface of the pupil and eyeball, giving them that bright, enamel, and limpid look which is one of the characteristic signs of health. It is the ceaseless movement and contraction of the eyelids that effect the regular spreading of the tears; and the flow of these has need to be constantly renewed in the way just mentioned, because tears not only evaporate after a few seconds, but also are carried away through two little drains, called lachrymal points, and situated in the corner of the eye, near the nose. Thus all tears, after leaving the eyelids, flow into the nostrils; and if the reader will assure himself of this, he has only to notice, unpoetical as the fact may be, that a person after crying much is always obliged to make a two-fold use of his or her pocket-handkerchief.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CLEANING MARBLE.—Mix up a quantity of the strongest soap lees with quicklime, to the consistency of milk, laying it on the marble for twenty-four hours, cleaning it afterwards with soap and water.

ITALIAN CREAM.—Italian cream is made as follows. Take one pint of thick cream; juice of two lemons; half a glass of white wine; a quarter of an ounce of isinglass; a quarter of a pound of loaf sugar; a teacupful of new milk. Mix the wine, lemon-juice, and sugar well together; add the cream by degrees, stirring it all the time, and then whisk it for a quarter of an hour. Dissolve the isinglass in a cupful of hot new milk; stir it lukewarm into the other ingredients, and whisk it all together for another quarter of an hour, and then put it into the mould.

IVORY POLISHING.—To polish plain turned ivory, rub it with whiting reduced to a thick cream with water, soaked in a piece of rag or flannel (this is done on the lathe); gradually reduce the thickness of the cream, and finish with a damp or wet rag with plain water. Then dry well and use a fine rag or flannel with a dash of sweet oil—it is a very simple and easy process. For ornamental work the matter is different; if the work is properly done, the cutting tool gives the polish, and the appliance of the polish tends to rub away the sharpness of the cuts, which is the beauty. However, the way to polish ornamental work is, to use the same thick whiting-paste with a long, thin, hard brush, called 'jeweller's brush' (between a nail and a tooth brush, but not so hard). Brush in well with the paste, reducing consistency, and finish with abundance of cold water, using the brush freely, as the whiting is most difficult to dislodge. After this, dry with a fine cloth, and allow the ivory to get quite dry; then take a dry brush (same kind) and rub your ivory until the required face is obtained.

It is said that Baron Rothschild will advance the Italian Government 100 millions of francs to help them out of their difficulties.

WALKING FISHES.—Dr. Shortt is expected shortly to arrive here from India, bringing with him about a dozen and a half of the walking fishes of India. *Murul* and *Korava*, many of them intended as a present to the Zoological Society's Gardens from Dr. Day. The largest species, known as *Ophiocanthus striatus*, grow upwards of three feet in length, and if they succeed in England, will make a capital addition to our lakes and canals. The smaller variety, *Ophiocanthus gachua*, will perhaps be more interesting than useful, as they only grow to about one foot in length. Pains have been taken to accustom them by degrees to confinement, before shipping them in iron boxes. Dr. Day is said to have come to the conclusion that they breathe air direct from the atmosphere, as well as air in solution in the water in which they live.



[LAPIERRE PREPARES CLAIRE FOR THE FUTURE.]

MICHELDEVER.

CHAPTER XI

THORNE found M. Lapierre sitting in the portico alone, and the young lover sprang from his steed, flourishing the open letter above his head.

"Did I not tell you, sir, what the result of my application to my father would be? Read that, and see how fully and freely he consents to my marriage; how anxious he is to serve you. He knows something of your former high estate, it seems, and he has sympathy for a fallen star of the financial world."

Thorne was very much excited, and in the triumph of the moment, he completely ignored the fraud he was about to impose on this honest old man. M. Lapierre, with some trepidation, took the offered letter, glanced over it, and, with a gratified smile, said:

"This is as explicit as I could wish, and very, very kind, I am sure. So your father has really heard of me; and in the exuberance of his goodness, he offers me a position among men again. I thank him deeply, sincerely, but it is too late—too late. I shall write to him myself, and express my feelings both with reference to myself and my daughter. If he will be kind to her, it is all I ask of him. For myself, it is too late to do anything."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, sir; but we must see about it in the future. Just now I have but one thought, and that is for Rosine. I may seek her now, I suppose, and win from her a promise to become my wife!"

"Yes, but at some distant day; that is understood, and I have already given my word to Mrs. Courtney that Claire shall travel with her."

"*Diable!*" arose to the lips of Thorne, but he repressed the exclamation in time, thinking that he would gain his own point yet in spite of them. He had not plunged himself in a web of deceit and falsehood to be baffled now. He calmed his impatience, and quietly said:

"I have heard of that plan, and perhaps it will be as well to defer our union till Claire is older; but I must tell her all that is in my heart, M. Lapierre, and with your permission, I will seek her. By the way, when your letter to my father is written, transfer it to me, and I will address, and forward it with my own. I shall hardly know how to thank him for the happiness he has conferred on me."

M. Lapierre smiled and nodded acquiescence, and Thorne disappeared through the door. He heard the

tones of the guitar, and he followed them to the sanctum of Claire. He had often been there before, but only as a guest; now he felt as if he entered it as master of the retreat, and its lovely owner.

Claire, in a white dress, with a few roses in her shining hair, sat near the window practising an air her lover had taught her; but at the sound of the firm step that rang upon the floor, she started up, flushing with joyful welcome. She saw the letter he held up, dropped the instrument at her feet, and sprang a few steps towards him, eagerly crying:

"It has come—all is right, for your face tells me so."

He caught her to his heart, and, for the first time, showered kisses on her brow and lips.

"It is right, my darling, my own—my heart's love. I am free to win you as soon as I can; at least I can express what has been struggling for utterance for days past, and you can listen without reproach. But you are not to listen alone, my angel; confirm in words what I have guessed, that you love me as ardently as I do you; is it not so, Rose of my life?"

She hid her face upon his breast, and the faint "yes" that issued from her lips was scarcely audible, but he understood it, and he embraced and kissed her again, till she shrank from him, abashed and trembling.

Claire sat down in one of the large chairs, and her lover placed himself on a cushion at her feet, that he might look up into her face, and read the exquisite changes that flitted over it, each one, he thought, more entrancing than the one that preceded it.

With the recklessness of a boy just freed from restraint, he poured forth the love that was in his heart, though he carefully guarded the treachery of which he was conscious through all his happiness. But he soothed his sense of wrong-doing by the proverb that "all is fair in love and war," and, in spite of the misgivings that would intrude, he was, for the moment, as foolishly enraptured as if his prospects rested on the most stable foundations.

He had cast care to the winds, never dreaming that they were likely to nurse it, till it burst in a tornado over himself, and the innocent object of his reckless pursuit.

He believed himself ready to brave everything for her sake; yet he did not once ask himself if he would stand by her in the hour of need, and defend her cause in defiance of all the world.

Unconscious that she would have a cause to sustain in the enchanting future that opened before her, Claire listened to the raptures of her adorer, and

responded to them in her own sweet way, till he thought the world well lost, for the possession of such a treasure.

When twilight began to gather, M. Lapierre came in to join them, and the two descended from the radiant heaven to which they had been transported, to the prosaic realities of common life.

The supper of fruit, cream, and tea cakes, had been laid in the front yard under the shade of the trees, for Betty had discovered that the bare and comfortless dining-room was not to the taste of the young autocrat, who, she had shrewdness enough to see, was rapidly establishing a strong foothold in the house that had sheltered him.

Thorne had farther propitiated her by laying aside his tone of levity when he addressed her, and by the present of a few gold pieces, which the old woman was not sufficiently disinterested to refuse.

The little party found the table decorated with fresh flowers, and the *al fresco* repast was enjoyed as much as was possible under the circumstances. Thorne was the only one who had much appetite for the dainty fruit and rich cream; but he was recovering from illness, and therefore the excitement of his feelings did not prevent him from doing justice to the good things set before him.

When Thorne brought a cup of hot tea to each one, Thorne took it from her waiter, and said, with eyes sparkling with mischief:

"You need not attempt to stand guard over your young lady and myself any longer, Mrs. Betty. Everything is settled; and I have permission to make love to her as much as I please. Ask papa there, if it be not true?"

Claire blushed and laughed, and M. Lapierre gravely said:

"Yes, Betty; this young gentleman is to be my son at some future day. It is right that so faithful a servant as you have been, should be told of it."

Mrs. Betty cried:

"I always thought that my Rosebud would come to be a grand lady. I only hope she'll be as happy as she's sweet and innocent. The Almighty looks after his own, and he'll keep her in his own hand, I hope and believe. I'll pray for her every day of my life, as I always have ever since she was born."

"And I hope you will give me the benefit of some of your prayers, too, Betty, for I am afraid I sadly need them," said Thorne, half mockingly, half in earnest.

"You speak truly, young man; but we're told that the believing wife shall save the unbelieving husband; and you will have an angel to walk through the world with you."

The young lover laughed gleefully at this, and said:

"Of course, with Claire to look after me, you to pray for me, and heaven to guide me, I shall not be apt to falter in well doing. But I intend to try and make your Rosebud happy, I assure you, Mrs. Betty."

"I wonder what you'll do when trouble comes on you, as it must to all earth's creatures. You're a quick-speaking youngster, and our Rosebud ain't been used to nothing but petting and sweet words. You must remember that, Mr. Thorne."

"As if I should be likely to forget it," and he flushed slightly under the old woman's fondness for lecturing.

"That will do for the present, Betty," said M. Lapierre. "Remove the things now; and you, Claire, had better retire to your retreat, and leave me a little while with Mr. Thorne. I wish to speak with him in private."

His orders were obeyed, and he and Thorne paced to and fro beneath the trees, talking earnestly. The tones of the younger man's voice were several times raised in vehement remonstrance, but in spite of his arguments in favour of an immediate marriage, all he could gain from M. Lapierre was the promise that a formal betrothal should take place that evening before they separated. Thorne was forced to concede that Claire should complete her imperfect education before their union took place. Deeply chagrined as he was at this, he consoled himself with the certainty that his own influence over the object of his choice would place her fate absolutely in his power, and he fully intended to use it to circumvent her father's wishes.

He smoothed his brow, as he heard the sound of approaching wheels, and in a few more moments Mrs. Courtney drove to the gate, and alighted from her carriage.

"It is late to come over," she said, "but I felt anxious about what is to be settled to-night, and I could not remain at home."

Thorne lightly said:

"I am glad that you have joined us, Mrs. Courtney, for things have been settled to your satisfaction. You have won, and I have lost, for M. Lapierre will not consent that I shall have my bride at once. My friends will be disappointed at the result of my wooing, but I find my old friend here invincible."

There was a tone of deep chagrin in his voice, and Mrs. Courtney gently replied:

"The time will come, Mr. Thorne, when you will acknowledge that we are right to retain Claire among us, till she is better fitted for the position in which you wish to place her. I have sufficiently discussed this subject with you, and you fully understand my wishes with regard to my godchild. To carry them out will be for your mutual benefit."

"So you may think, madam; but I cannot agree with you. Pure and perfect happiness is rarely found on this earth, yet you deny its fruition to Claire and myself. You wish to separate her from me, that she may be taught to be conventional and worldly, while I prize her for the sweet simplicity which is her most attractive charm. I wish for no change in her; I adore her as she is."

"I comprehend that; but it does not alter my convictions as to our duty to our child, Mr. Thorne. I expect you to chafe a little under your disappointment. You would not be a true lover if you did not; but you are too reasonable not to yield graciously to the wishes of M. Lapierre."

He rather sullenly replied:

"Of course I must yield. There is nothing else left me; but I cannot do it with a good grace. Since nothing more is to be gained, I consent to the betrothal, as that will, in some measure, bind Claire to me."

The three went into the house together, and in a few moments entered Claire's retreat. The room was brilliantly illuminated, and, as usual, decorated with fresh flowers. The young girl, herself the fairest flower of them all, stood beside a music-stand, looking over its contents. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes brilliant with the new light of love that flooded her whole being; and in her heart she wished that she was mistress of her whole destiny, for she would have left both father and friend, to follow him she had learned to love so trustingly.

Mrs. Courtney went forward, and tenderly kissing her, said:

"I have come to witness your betrothal, Claire, for I feel sure Mr. Thorne would not defer it beyond this evening. Dear child, do not tremble. It is a simple ceremony, and will soon be over."

"I do not tremble with fear, but with happiness," whispered the young girl, as she buried her face in the maternal bosom that had been her refuge in all her childish troubles. "Oh, mamma, that Walter should have chosen me from all others—that he should be willing to raise me to an equality with him—

self, seems too great happiness for an obscure creature like myself."

"My dear Claire, you must not underrate yourself. In everything, save fortune, you are quite Mr. Thorne's equal: A wife must claim the respect as well as the affection of her husband. Remember that, my love, and maintain your own dignity."

Claire faintly laughed at the last suggestion, for she was too much of a child to dream of dignity in connection with herself. She raised her beautiful eyes, and glanced towards her father and lover. M. Lapierre gravely said:

"My daughter, I have formally consented to a betrothal between yourself and Mr. Thorne, and as he is anxious to have the ceremony over, we have come hither for that purpose. Give him your hand, and repeat such a form of words as you may think necessary to keep you true to each other, through the two years of probation that have been settled on."

Thorne sprung to her side, drew Claire to the centre of the room, and clasping her hand in a fervent pressure, said, in a loud voice:

"I pledge my love, my life, my honour to you, Claire Lapierre, and vow before heaven that you shall become my beloved and cherished wife, as soon as I am permitted to make you such, and, in token of my faith, I place upon your finger this ring which was once my mother's."

As he slipped on the ring—a plain hoop of gold, which he had worn on his little finger—Claire, with perfect self-possession, spoke in her turn:

"And I accept your troth, Walter Thorne, and give you in return my promise to cling only unto you. To love you, to be true to you through all the chances and changes of life, and to hold myself ready to ratify these vows at the altar, whenever the consent of my father permits me to do so."

A voice from the door cried out "Amen," and all turned to see who had intruded on this scene.

A small, fair man, wearing a long, flowing, black robe, with an ebony cross hanging from the girdle that bound his waist, stood in the doorway. M. Lapierre approached him with words of eager welcome.

"Dear Jerome, what has brought you to our valley again? I had been most anxious to see you, and you could not have arrived at a more opportune moment."

"Thanks, my son. I have come back to make the Happy Valley my abiding place so long as I tarry on earth. I have been compelled to relinquish my wandering life, and my missionary duties are at an end. I find that I must have a settled home, on account of my rapidly failing health."

Mrs. Courtney and Claire came forward with extended hands and smiles of welcome, and Jerome said:

"My daughters, I give you my blessing; and this young gentleman is entitled to it, too, I presume, from the scene I have just witnessed."

Jerome warmly grasped his hand, for he was most earnest in the calling which he had embraced from the convictions of his own heart, and he thought he saw before him a promising proselyte to the ancient faith he firmly believed to be the only true one.

He spoke with solemn and impressive dignity.

"My son, the heart that is open to conviction is always a noble and faithful one. We will talk seriously together at a more fitting time, and I hope to be able to convince you where true salvation is to be found. I am glad to know that this pet lamb of my flock will not fall into unworthy hands, for I have loved her from her babyhood."

Jerome looked so feeble and worn that Claire hastened to place a chair for him, and he sank into it breathing heavily.

"I fear that you have over-exerted yourself," said Mrs. Courtney; "you seem very much exhausted."

"It is the weary travel in the burning sun that has so overcome me. I have walked many miles with this haven of rest in view. I am failing rapidly, my daughter, and I have come back to the old place to yield up my spirit in its peaceful shades. But to the will of heaven I resign myself."

"I trust heaven will not decree that you shall be taken from us in the midst of your days," replied Mrs. Courtney, with emotion. "I have often wished for your return, and now that we have you back with us, we will nurse you into strength and usefulness again."

He shook his head, already silvered over, though he had not passed his fortieth year, and mournfully replied:

"That may never be, for my labours are nearly ended. But I did not come hither to cast a gloom over my friends, and above all, I would not bring

the shadow of doom into a house that has just witnessed the betrothal of two young and happy hearts."

Claire had flitted out, and she now returned, followed by Betty, bearing a waiter on which refreshments were placed. The old woman asked and received the benediction, and then bustled out to complete the preparation of the tea, which she knew would prove the best restorative.

Jerome had for years lived the hard and laborious life of a missionary, wandering from one mountain district to another, wherever the followers of his faith were to be found, occasionally spending an interval of repose in the valley, among the cultivated friends he found there. Mrs. Courtney had erected a small chapel on her place, in which he officiated when in the neighbourhood; and near it was a secluded cottage, which she had often pressed him to accept as a permanent home.

Hitherto he had refused to give up his wandering life, but now he had come to avail himself of the promise she had made him, that the place should be open to him whenever he felt himself willing to accept it. A violent cold, contracted during the previous winter, had settled on his lungs, and Jerome knew that his days were numbered, so he came to the friends he loved best, to die with them.

When he had refreshed himself, Mrs. Courtney chequered said:

"Your cottage is ready to receive you, for I have had it kept in order for your reception at any hour. But you must spend a few days at the Grange with me before you take formal possession."

"Thanks, my daughter; I knew that I should find your benevolent heart open to my necessities; therefore I came to you and to my old friends here, to minister to me when I am no longer able to suffice to myself. I have not spared myself in this service of others; but it is better to 'wear out than to rust out.' What has become of the young people, and how is it that I find Claire betrothed bride, while the crown of childhood is yet upon her young brow?"

With some reluctance, M. Lapierre explained how Thorne had come into the valley; how ill he had been, and how Claire had been compelled to play the part of nurse to him. But he hastened to say that the ceremony Jerome had witnessed, was not to be followed by an immediate marriage.

Jerome listened attentively, and then said:

"It was unfortunate that the young man was thrown on your hospitality, but it was fate I suppose. I do not approve of long engagements; they rarely end well. If this Mr. Thorne be all you tell me, if he can secure the future of Claire, I think you will do well to allow the marriage to take place without any unnecessary delay. They seem to be very much in love with each other, so why should you postpone their happiness?"

"But Claire is so very young, as you yourself remarked just now."

"Yes—I was surprised that you had suffered things to go so far, but having done so, it will be best to complete the affair, for Claire will consider herself as much bound to this young man as if the blessing of the church had been pronounced over them; and he, when he leaves her, may consider himself free to go upon his way, and forget his pledges to her. The poor child will be left in a very disagreeable position."

"Really, Jerome," said Mrs. Courtney, "I scarcely expected you to take part with Mr. Thorne—for he is most anxious to have his marriage concluded at once. I hope you will not express your views before him, for I have set my heart on taking Claire with me to France next spring."

"Of course I shall not place myself in opposition to her father's wishes," was the grave response. "I merely expressed my own convictions. I do not expect either you or M. Lapierre to be influenced by them."

While this conversation went on, Claire and her lover were out in the summer night beneath the stars, talking such sweet nonsense as lovers like to hear; uttering vows of eternal constancy, and planning the ideal life they would spend together in those days when they would be permitted to walk hand in hand upon the path of life.

Jerome at length said:

"But, Claire, I wish to claim you now. Two years are so long to wait, and you will soon be removed so far away. Oh! my darling, if I do not claim you within a month, I have a presentiment that something will happen to separate us for ever."

"But what can happen, Walter? The time seems long, but it will soon pass away, and however distant from you I may be, my heart will be ever with you—my thoughts will always hover around you. If I go with mamma, it will only be to render myself more worthy to become your wife."

"I know—I understand all you can say on that

subject; but you are all that I wish now. If—if—oh, Rosebud, listen to me, and yield to my prayer. You are mine by a solemn ceremony now; consent to make that irrevocable without the knowledge of your father, and all will be well. He will forgive us when it is over. Speak, my angel—tell me that you will become really mine, and I shall be the happiest and proudest of men."

Claire shrank from him, and hurriedly said:

"Don't tempt me to do wrong, Walter. Papa would forgive me, but he would lose faith in me and also in you, if we deceived him. My heart is traitorous enough to him now, without giving him this final blow."

"So you prefer sending me from you, miserable and despairing, sooner than take your fate in your own hands. Oh, Claire, if you loved as I do, you could not be so cruel. I would defy the world for your sake. I would pass through fire to win you, and you refuse me what I have almost the right to demand, after what has passed here this evening."

She stood white and trembling, uncertain on which side her duty lay, but at length she faintly said:

"Dear Walter, if you could look into my heart, you would not say that your love for me is deeper or truer than mine is for you. When I listen to you, I have no power to resist, so pray be generous, and aid me to do what is right. My word is pledged to my father, and I must not break it, reproach me as you will. Neither can I bear the thought of a separation from you. It seems to me that I shall die if you leave me alone, after this dream of heaven has opened to me."

"Yes, I must go, since you refuse to give me the hand I so ardently covet. My father is a very singular and imperious man, and if you do not return with me as my wife, so great is his anxiety to see me married, that he will be capable of insisting that I shall give my hand to a young girl he has long been most anxious for me to marry. Of course I shall resist his commands, but in doing so I shall disobey him, as much as you will your father if you marry me clandestinely."

Claire did not see the sophistry of this argument. She tremulously said:

"Your father must indeed be a very strange person to require such submission, when he knows that you are attached to me. Have pity on me, Walter—do not urge me any more, for I dare not wound my poor old father by acting as you wish. He is not strong, and—I do not know what the result might be."

Thorne saw how much excited she was, how weak in her resistance, and he triumphantly thought that a few more efforts would bring her to the terms he had dictated.

At that crisis voices were heard issuing from the portico, and Jerome came out with Mrs. Courtney, followed by M. Lapierre. Before entering her carriage, Mrs. Courtney took leave of Claire, and said :

"Come to me to-morrow, my love, for I have much to say to you. Jerome will talk seriously to Mr. Thorne, and I hope he will ratify all the pledges he gave this evening."

"You must not doubt his perfect sincerity, mamma," was the whispered reply, "for I know that Walter is the soul of honour."

"I trust so, my love, for your sake. Now bid Jerome good night, for I am going to take him away with me."

"I am sorry for that, but of course you have the best right to him."

Jerome placed his hand upon the head of the young girl, and gently said:

"You have my blessing, my child, and my prayers for your happiness. You may be the means of bringing back a stray lamb to the fold, and heaven will reward you for it in its own good time!"

Claire reverently raised his hand to her lips, and deprecatingly replied:

"I am afraid that I have thought more of the earthly happiness of my betrothed, than of his eternal welfare."

"But now we will think of both, my daughter. I shall talk with Mr. Thorne, and convince him that being one with you in faith, will make him more completely one with you in affection and happiness. Farewell, my child, I shall see you to-morrow at the Grange."

Thorne found an opportunity to exchange a few tender words with his betrothed before leaving, and in a few more moments the old Frenchman and his daughter were left standing together in the silent garden.

CHAPTER XII.

As the sound of the carriage wheels died away in the distance M. Lapierre said:

"Come with me, my darling, for a little while. I am unaccountably depressed by what has happened here this evening; it is selfish in me, but I feel as if

I have given another more power over you than I possess myself. Sit near me, Claire, and let me feel that, now your betrothed is away from you, you are all my own again."

He entered the portico, and threw himself upon the wide bench that was placed against the wall; Claire brought a low chair from the house and nestled down beside him, with her soft hands clasping his. She tenderly said:

"Dearest papa, I love you dearly; indeed I do, though I have given my troth to Mr. Thorne. Do not feel jealous of the affection he has won—it is so different from that I cherish for you."

"Ah, yes—so different. I know, I understand, for I have loved myself; I know how exacting, how all-absorbing first love is. I do not think I could bear the certainty that another has taken from me the highest place in your affections, if my life were to be prolonged. But heaven is merciful, and takes me from the trouble that must have come at some time, though I scarcely looked for it so soon."

"Ah, papa! don't talk so, I cannot bear it. Why should you, of late, always speak of death in connection with yourself?"

"Because I am an old man now, and the thought of the inevitable is most familiar to me. But I do not wish to sadden you, Claire, on this evening, which should be so happy to you. You have pledged yourself to your lover, and I trust that he will prove worthy of trust. I shall not live to witness your union with him; nay, do not interrupt me, child; I must speak the truth to you, and you must listen to me with calmness. I cannot bear any more excitement this evening; my heart is beating its funeral march now; I feel its rapid pulsations."

He drew her hand over his heart, and with dismay she felt the wild force with which the blood was rushing through it. She faintly asked:

"What does this mean, papa? Why have you concealed from me the suffering you must long have borne? What is it?—oh, what is the cause of this?"

M. Lapierre lifted the hand tenderly, and implessly replied:

"It is the premonitory warning sent to all of my race when death draws near. A little while, and you will be fatherless—there—hush that cry, and listen to me, Claire, for I feel as if I must no longer delay speaking with you on the subject of your future."

"Oh, papa, papa, it breaks my heart to hear you talk in this way."

"Hush, my darling—don't unnerve me. What I am about to say may console you even for my loss. Until to-night I have been opposed to an early union with your lover, but something Jerome said to me has caused me to take a different view of your position. It may be better to have your marriage over soon—heaven knows if I am right, and I am so anxious for your welfare when I am removed from you, that I can scarcely judge fairly."

With a movement of joy, Claire pressed his hand to her lips, but he checked her when she would have spoken:

"Mrs. Courtney will oppose an early marriage, and, if you choose, she will take you with her to France, and perform a mother's duty by you. Should you elect to go with her, seek your brother, bear him my forgiveness, and use your influence to make him a good man. Ah! he was once the pride and joy of my life, but he suffered another to come between us—to draw him from the path of honour—but that is all past and gone now. He is my son—your brother—and I do not wish to keep my children altogether apart."

"I never wish to see him, or to hold any communication with him," said Claire. "He has been a neglectful son to you. After ruining you, he has forsaken you through all these years, leaving you to labour in poverty for the bread you ate. Don't ask me to seek him, papa, for I can never do it."

"But it has not been altogether his fault, my child, for I have withheld from him the knowledge of my retreat. Among my papers will be found proofs of the debt he owes me, and to you he must repay it. He is rich—he was once liberal, and for you he must do, what I have disdained to accept for myself."

"Don't ask me to accept money from Armand, when he has denied it to your necessities. I could not take it from him. You make me wretched, papa, by talking as if you were going to leave me for ever."

"Not for ever, my darling; beyond the grave we shall one day be reunited, and that thought sustains me now. I will not press the subject on you, Claire, but hereafter, when you recall what has passed between us this night, you will try to do what I wish. I feel very much worn out and depressed, but I am not worse than I have often been of late. I think a good night's rest will restore me to my usual state; but I shall die suddenly, Claire, and I wish to prepare you

for the shock; that is why I have spoken to-night as I have done. But you need have little fear that anything will happen to me yet awhile. I only wish to say to you, that when I am gone, if Jerome consents to unite you with your lover, in place of going to France, you may decline the bounty of Mrs. Courtney, and go with the man of your choice."

Claire uttered a low cry of mingled pain and joy. She said:

"Why, papa, after the words I used this evening, when I gave my troth to Walter, your consent places my fate at his disposal, and you know how anxious he is for a speedy marriage."

"But my consent is conditional. While I live, I will keep you near me; when I am dead, give Mr. Thorne your hand without any unnecessary delay."

The feelings of the young girl were divided between joy and dread. The words of her father filled her heart with fears for him, while it bounded wildly at the prospect so unexpectedly opened, of an early union with her lover. She gathered from his words that Jerome was in favour of it, and deeply she thanked him, unconscious that the day would speedily come, in which she would have bitter cause to regret the view he had taken of her position, and, in his anxiety to secure her fortune, had irretrievably wrecked it.

She kissed her father, and said:

"I cannot thank you as I should, papa, for all your tender and undeviating kindness to me. But you have talked too much already, and I think you had better try to repose now. It is past your usual hour for retiring, and your voice begins to fail you. To-morrow you will think more cheerfully of yourself, and I trust that you will yet be spared to me for many years."

"Perhaps so; I only wished to prepare you for the shock when it comes, but I scarcely know what impelled me to speak on this subject to-night. I will go in now, but, after I am in bed, come to me with your guitar, my child, and sing to me some of the grand old anthems you can render so effectively."

(To be continued.)

THE AVENGER OF NELSON.—Another of the veterans of Trafalgar has been taken from us. Commander John Pollard, R.N., died on the 23rd ult., after a long and severe illness, at his residence in Greenwich Hospital. Our readers will like to hear something of the service of this interesting, though neglected old officer, who was born on the 27th of July, 1787, and entered the navy on the 1st of November, 1797, as first-class volunteer, on board the *Havick*, 16, in which sloop, after having chased a large convoy and three armed vessels under the batteries of St. Malo, and been for some time warmly engaged with the enemy, he was wrecked on the 9th of November, 1800, in St. Aubin's Bay, Jersey. He next served in the *Cambridge*, 74; *Hercule*, 74; *Culoden*, 74; and *Canopus*, 80, and thence was transferred to the *Victory*, 100, bearing the flag of Lord Nelson. On the return of the fleet from its pursuit of the combined fleets to the West Indies, Mr. Pollard was afforded, as signal midshipman, an opportunity of participating in the action off Cape Trafalgar. On that occasion, while standing on the poop, he was struck by a splinter on the right arm, and chanced to be the first officer who was there hit. A musket ball next passed through the shell of his spy glass above his hand, and a second one shattered the watch in his pocket. Some time after the *Victory* had been in action with the French 74-gun ship *Redoubtable*, the officers and men around him beginning to fall fast, the attention of Mr. Pollard was arrested by a number of riflemen crouching in the tops of the *Redoubtable*, and directing a destructive fire on the poop and quarter-deck of the *Victory*. He immediately seized a musket, and, being supplied by the signal quartermaster with ammunition left by the marines, (who from being picked off so fearfully were ordered by Nelson himself from the poop to the starboard gangway,) continued firing at the men in the enemy's tops till not one was to be seen. In the act of handing the last parcel of ball cartridges the quartermaster was killed on the spot, leaving Mr. Pollard, when the action terminated, the only officer alive of those who had been originally stationed on the poop, and thus originated the belief that it was he who gave the fatal blow to the man who shot Lord Nelson, and this fact was shortly after the action confirmed by his captain, Sir Thomas Hardy, who sent for him into the ward room, and in the presence of the officers, congratulated him upon having avenged the death of their immortal chief. On leaving the *Victory* the following month he served successively in the *Queen*, 98; *Dreadnought*, 98; and the *Hibernia*, 110, bearing the

respective flags of Lords Collingwood, Northesk, and St. Vincent, and was made lieutenant, November 14th, 1806, and continued serving, with only an intermission of 16 months, until 1814, during which time he saw much war and service, and was engaged in many cutting-out expeditions, until September of that year, when he had to return home sick, and, notwithstanding such distinguished services as we have narrated, Mr. Pollard was allowed to remain unrewarded, and shelved on half-pay till 1828, when he was appointed for three years, still a lieutenant, to the Ordinary, at Sheerness. From 1836 to 1853 he served in the Coastguard, and the latter year, as a tardy recognition of his services, both in war and peace, was, as a Lieutenant, appointed to Greenwich Hospital. It is hard to conceive how an officer who stood such a murderous fire on the poop of the Victory at Trafalgar, and who, if the event had happened in these days, would have been thought worthy of a Victoria Cross, or at least rapid advancement till he attained his flag, should have been permitted to pine away in the same rank which he held the year after the action, with the exception of the mere nominal title of "retired commander." Our readers will agree with us, that this gallant officer, now passed to his rest, was "not ruined by promotion."

THE WITCH FINDER.

CHAPTER XX.

CLASPED in each other's arms, in a permanent thrill, varying from laughing to weeping, their souls in a tumult, their thoughts melting into feeling, their sweet voices radiant with the light of love, Mrs. Waybrook and Hester were again seated in their little sitting-room, awaiting the arrival of Philip.

Every few moments they looked at the old-fashioned clock in one corner, with a newly-discovered wonder at the immense intervals between its tickings, and at times they listened intently for the music of coming footsteps, and again and again, their impatient affection becoming too great for silence.

"It is time," murmured Hester, after one of these delicious outgoings of their souls. "The distance was only a few steps! Philip must have shared our impatience! Oh, he's coming! he's coming!"

Listening again, with eager expectancy, with glowing features, and with a form in which a thousand thrills of pleasure were throbbing and mingling, she presented a rare picture of glorified womanhood, and one that seemed to bring down upon the earth the glances of heaven.

There was indeed a slight shadow in the bright picture she presented—not resting upon the features, but hovering over them, coming and going, at the thought of her father; but it was a shadow illuminated with a heavenly radiance, and which no more dimmed the light of her bright, sweet face, than the light of the sun is extinguished by a transient mist.

The mother, in all save youth, was the counterpart of Hester—not so blooming, not so full of the rosy hues of health and strength; but grander, statelier—every line of her face, her whole figure, having been glorified by a spirit filled with that immortal loveliness which grows more and more beautiful with the lapse of years, for ever and for ever.

"I pray that he will hasten," said she, in answer to her daughter, "for I feel that he will not be long in procuring us tidings of your father. Perhaps he will bring word of him!"

"Or it may be that they will come home together," rejoined the maiden. "I feel that all is well with my father, and that we shall soon see him."

"I have no doubt of it—and I have been too long and closely united to your father, in perfect union of souls, to fear that this firm and instinctive conviction of his safety is a delusion."

Again they listened, hand in hand and heart to heart, and this time they were thrilled and startled by hearing hurried footsteps on the walk in front of the house.

"'Tis Philip," cried Hester, starting to her feet in a whirl of emotion. "And yet—"

Fear held her silent. The footstep was too light to be Philip's.

An excited knock followed.

The door had been already unlocked and unbared, to be in readiness for the expected arrivals, and the visitor instantly entered—a woman, Mistress Peabody.

Flushed and excited, almost reeling with joy, the fugitive closed the door with nervous haste behind her, and hurried into the presence of Mrs. Waybrook and Hester, who advanced to meet her.

"It is Mistress Peabody!" "Welcome, Mistress Peabody!" were the exclamations of the maiden and her mother, with an astonishment equalled only by their joy, as they clasped her in their embraces. "At last," added Hester, "we have you with us! At last you are free!"

The new comer returned their caresses and joyful greetings.

"Yes, at last I am free!" she cried, as she held up the rope-ladder which had been the means of her escape from the prison, and which had since done her much good service at the house of Boardbush. "Oh, little did the dear White Angel think when she sent me this rope-ladder, Mistress Waybrook, that it would soon do you an immense service, in addition to the use for which it was intended! Little did she think of the use it would be to those through whom it was sent to me!"

The two women looked inquiringly at the fugitive, and then at each other.

"But so it was," pursued Mistress Peabody, as she danced around the room, almost wild with her joy. "At last I am bewitched in good earnest! My heart is bursting with its secret! Mr. Waybrook has come home, my dear friends, and as soon as you can prepare yourselves to see him, he will be in your midst!"

The mother and daughter were speechless with their great joy, but by a mutual impulse they both bounded towards the door, which Mistress Peabody had closed so carefully behind her.

"Yes, that's it; he's there," she added, skipping about the apartment, and shaking her rope-ladder with the agility of a girl. "Come in, Mr. Waybrook. We are all ready to see you."

The door again opened, and the overjoyed merchant, who had been waiting breathlessly on the steps for this glad moment, precipitated himself into the arms of his wife and daughter.

The scene of delight that followed must be left to the imagination of the reader.

"And Philip? What of Philip?" asked Mr. Waybrook, as soon as he could speak. "Have you heard or seen anything of him?"

"Yes; he's safe," replied Hester. "And we expect him here."

"Oh, heaven is indeed merciful!" exclaimed the merchant. "Let our hearts be full of praise and thanksgiving."

"He was rescued by Temperance Stoughton," explained Hester; "and received every care from Corporal Trueaxe, who has returned to the judge's, to bring him home to us. But where is the Harbinger, and what is the secret of this strange arrival? Tell us what has happened."

At this moment a crash was heard in the kitchen, and, as Mrs. Waybrook opened the door between the two rooms, Bruno came bounding into the presence of the little party, having jumped through the broken window into the kitchen.

The first movement of the bear was to roll over and over, in the midst of his friends, with a delight so marked, so intense, that no one present had for a moment a doubt of its cause. His eyes dancing, his mouth open, he gave utterance to a succession of little grunts of pleasure, and fondled the feet of Mr. Waybrook, his wife, and Hester, and even Mistress Peabody, one after another, with a joy, a radiance and jubilance that was pleasant as significant.

"He has found Philip!" exclaimed Hester, as soon as she could find voice to utter the joyful conviction. "I never before saw Bruno so joyfully excited. It means that Philip is coming."

"Yes, he brings us news of Philip," answered Mrs. Waybrook, "and probably precedes him only a few moments."

"Right!" exclaimed a ringing voice, just without the broken window. "For here I am!"

There was a general rush in that direction.

The door of the kitchen opened, and the manly form of the young navigator illuminated the doorway, and thence beamed into the apartment with a quickness that only the wings of love can exhibit.

Two glad cries mingled in one:

"Philip!" "Hester!"

And the lovers clasped each other in such a firm embrace that it seemed as if they meant to be never more put asunder.

The simple truth was—Bruno, going forth the second time to look for his master, had passed to the leeward of him, and again taken the scent, whereupon he had leaped through one of the windows, in the most unexpected manner, scaring the old woman nearly out of her senses, and relieving Philip from a mortal agony; after which our hero, taking advantage of the consternation of Lettis, and of the aid of Bruno, had made his escape, wrapped in a blanket he had taken from the bed, his coat and waistcoat having been burnt.

It would be difficult to describe the joy which animated those two faithful hearts; the strong man

trembling with the fervour of his love, and the gentle maiden smiling through the tears which filled her eyes. Very difficult, indeed, and we may as well abandon these first moments of rapture to the imagination of our readers.

A coat and waistcoat were supplied to Philip, and for a few minutes the happy couple, thus joyously reunited, conversed with as much delight as if all the witch-hunters in the world had been buried and forgotten.

In the foreground, of course, were Hester and Philip, and upon the broad hearth the merchant and his wife, seated side by side in their easy-chairs, each again possessing the great light of existence so long denied them.

It was a joyous spectacle, after all the perils and dangers we have seen lowering around these noble hearts; one of those rare seasons of bliss which occasionally enter into the darkness of this world, to give us an indication, a foretaste of the joy which awaits us in the great hereafter.

"I had forgotten all about the good corporal," at length remarked Mrs. Waybrook, turning to Philip. "Why is he not with you?"

"The corporal? I have not seen him. Miss Stoughton sent him away before I had recovered my senses."

"We met him on the beach soon after that, and bade him go back to your assistance, telling him to lose no time in bringing you home to us."

"Indeed? It is strange, then, that he did not come to me. Or perhaps," added Philip, bethinking himself of his sudden removal from the judge's, "perhaps he could not find me, on his return to Miss Stoughton's!"

"Well, we will look for his arrival," declared Mrs. Waybrook, evasively, "and in the meantime our returned travellers must have something to eat. If you will excuse us, Nathan—and you, Philip—Hester and I will lose no time in preparing tea for you."

"For my part, gracious wife," said Mr. Waybrook, "I should prefer to bear you company to the kitchen, and enjoy an occasional word or look from you while your hands are busy!"

"I say the same," said Philip, arising and putting his arm around Hester, with the intention of accompanying her. "Suppose we adjourn to the kitchen."

"Come, then, all of you," said Mrs. Waybrook, with a will which attested her gladness. "Hester and I are as delighted as flattered to find our society in such favour."

At this juncture a sound of heavy footsteps was heard in the street, as of a man running, and in less time than it takes to record the fact, these footsteps ceased at the door, against which the new-comer hurled himself violently.

"Open! open!" called a panting voice, mingled with a hurried knocking.

"It is the corporal," said Hester, hastening to admit him. "He is evidently in trouble."

The countenance of Corporal Trueaxe, as he entered the sitting-room, was so indicative of terror and apprehension, that the beholders were startled. He had fallen repeatedly, during his wild flight thither, and his pallid features were bleeding in several places from the injuries thus received; but more terrible than these marks of his distress were the fright and horror revealed in his every look, gesture and movement.

"What has happened?" demanded Hester, as he sank half-faintly, and without taking any notice of her companions, into the chair she placed for him.

"In a moment—I will tell you," answered the old soldier, closing his eyes wearily, and gasping for breath. "First of all—lock the door and bolt it—and then, Miss Hester—bring me any guns, swords, or pistols, you may happen to have handy!"

The maiden secured the door, while Philip, the merchant, Mrs. Waybrook and Mistress Peabody resumed the seats from which they had arisen.

"And now for the news," suggested the maiden, returning to the corporal. "What is the matter?"

"In the first place," he began, "I went back to that girl, Temperance Stoughton, but could not see anything of her nor of Philip!"

"The reason of this is simple," answered Hester, as he paused for breath. "Philip had started for home—he is here!"

The eyes of the corporal opened quickly and widely, to see our hero, smiling and happy, scarcely a yard from him, and a flush of delight and relief overspread his features.

"That accounts for your absence! It is doubly sure, then—I was no more bewitched, after all, than you are!"

Philip assented, without understanding the allusion, and Trueaxe continued:

"Alarmed and horrified, I hurried home and—and had certain adventures which I need not pause to

rele, after which I went out of doors again, when I saw Miss Temperance coming. She was groaning and wringing her hands, and howling to herself, because—as near as I could make out—because Boardbush hadn't arrested Miss Hester—"

"Arrested Hester?" interrupted Philip, looking inquiringly from the corporal to his betrothed, for he had not yet formed any conception of the real state of affairs in Salem. "What do you mean?"

"Let the corporal finish his story," said Mrs. Waybrook, "and we will explain the mystery afterwards."

The old soldier accordingly resumed:

"All of a sudden I saw Miss Temperance throw herself into the snow, roll over and over, tearing her hair and pounding her breast, and pretty soon she hurried away to the judge's. I followed. Thinking that a plot of some kind was hatching, I crept up under the judge's window, and introduced a jack-knife into the shutter, to such an extent as to be able to look right into the room. And what did I see? Why, the judge and Cotton Mather, listening to a cock-and-bull story from that girl Stoughton, of how she'd been bewitched out of the house by Miss Hester and Mistress Waybrook, who had rolled her in the snow, dipped her into the sea, torn her clothes nearly off, pounded and beat her, and stuck her as full of pins and needles as a cushion!"

"And what did the judge and Cotton Mather do?" asked Hester, restraining the questions of her lover by a gentle pressure on his arm.

"Why, they wrote it all down, and pulled out the pins—more than a dozen—and counted the pin-holes in her bosom—more than a hundred, which she made herself, the horrible creature—after which they talked to each other about having Miss Hester and her mother arrested, as soon as the witch-hunters can do it! And so they're coming! they're coming! Boardbush and his whole posse come at us—to borrow a little Latin—and I've nearly run the breath out of my body coming to tell you!"

The consternation and horror with which these revelations inspired the mother and daughter, as well as their friend, can be imagined.

"Coming here?" exclaimed Mistress Peabody, becoming pale with her painful excitement.

"Coming to arrest us, dear mother?" murmured Hester, encircling Mrs. Waybrook in her arms, as if to protect her. "Oh, what shall we do? They may come before we have time to explain matters to my father and Philip!"

The two men looked at each other and at their companions as if the scene in which they were figuring seemed to them a horrible trance.

The corporal was the first to break the silence.

"If I may speak as a military man," said he—"as a strategist—I counsel an instant retreat to one of the deserted houses now so numerous in Salem!"

He turned his gaze particularly upon the feminine members of the little party, because they only fully understood the facts upon which his proposal was based, and continued:

"Fact is, Mr. Waybrook and Philip are all in the dark with regard to things here, and we're not a whit wiser as to their misfortunes and adventures. No time to explain—enemy coming, all of us tired to death—and sure to be pounced upon by the witch-hunters before morning, if we attempt to remain in our present quarters. On the other hand, Miss Hester, Boardbush will not readily think of looking for us in one of these deserted houses, and we may pass a week there before he will get track of us—or at least have time enough for a full understanding of our respective positions!"

"Your idea is a good one, Corporal Trueaxe," replied Hester, "don't you think so, mother?"

"Excellent, is it not, Mistress Peabody?"

Mistress Peabody approved the proposition heartily.

"It is settled, then," said Trueaxe, turning to the merchant and Philip. "We will go to a deserted house, to one lately occupied by Mr. and Mistress Rogers, for instance—"

"Yes, that is the one I had in my mind," interrupted Hester. "It is large and comfortable, and contains all its furniture, just as it was left by the late owners. I have a key which is sure, I think, to unlock the door, and the sooner we go there the better!"

Philip and Mr. Waybrook, although in a maze of wonderment, had the sense and politeness to allow the ladies to have their own way, without bothering them with troublesome questions, and in a few minutes, after collecting a few provisions and other desirable objects to take with them, the little party left the house, under the lead of Trueaxe, with Bruno at their heels, Tabby in Hester's arms, and hurried away through the streets of the town.

A few minutes more and the little party came to a halt in front of a large house, of rather preten-

tious appearance, which Philip at once recognized as having been the residence, seven months before, of a very worthy and respectable family named Rogers.

He had known Mr. and Mrs. Rogers as a very pleasant couple, in comfortable circumstances, who, having no relatives or children, had always been kind and generous to their neighbours, especially those in need of assistance, and Philip was curious to know by what strange fate they had disappeared from their dwelling.

He had no time for speculation, however, for Hester sprang up the steps, producing a key from her pocket, and opened the door. In a moment the whole party, including Hester's cat and the bear, had taken possession of the house, unseen and unheard, and Hester had locked the door behind her.

"It will never do to tell my father and Philip that Mr. and Mistress Rogers have both been hanged as witches," whispered she to Corporal Trueaxe, "for such a declaration would open the whole budget of horrors which the town has produced in their absence. They are safe here, for the present, and we must get them to bed, without going into any explanations, for there will be time enough to explain matters in the morning."

The corporal assented, and followed the maiden into the sitting-room, whither Mrs. Waybrook, familiar with the house, had already conducted the merchant and Philip, in compliance with a suggestion from her daughter.

"We need a light and a fire," declared Hester, "and there is fortunately no objection to our having them. The shutters are closed, the curtains drawn, and the windows even covered with blankets, as I happen to know. Wood and candles are here, and as the smoke of our chimney will not be seen at night, we will make ourselves comfortable."

She produced, as if by magic, a lighted candle, and lost no time in applying the same to a pile of wood in the fireplace, which had previously been placed in readiness therein.

The merchant and Philip surveyed the room by the light thus furnished them, but saw nothing to remark in it. It was plainly but sufficiently furnished, attesting at once the taste and means of its late inhabitants, and was large enough for the comfort of the whole party.

"And now for a supper for our famished voyagers," pursued Hester, "after which they must go to bed, and my mother and I will watch over them."

"Exactly, with Bruno and Trueaxe to help you," said the corporal. "There is a room at the other end of the house for Mr. and Mrs. Waybrook—Bruno and I will share the kitchen with Mistress Peabody—and Philip may sleep here, with Miss Hester to mount guard over him, if she pleases."

"But I wish to know," began Philip, "the meaning of all these mysteries—"

The maiden interrupted him by putting her hand gently over his mouth.

"You must be patient," said she, "and wait until morning. A good sleep is the first thing requisite after your supper."

In the course of half-an-hour the maiden had carried out her programme, with the assistance of the old corporal, and all had become quiet for the night in the house so singularly invaded.

The merchant and his wife had retired to the room assigned them, and Mr. Waybrook was sleeping. Mistress Peabody had taken possession of a couch in the kitchen, while Trueaxe and Bruno had lain down before a fire the corporal had kindled in that apartment. As to Philip, he was already asleep upon the couch where he had thrown himself after taking his supper, and Hester sat in a rocking-chair near him, her eyes resting tenderly upon him, and full of the great joy his safety and presence gave her.

We leave her to her happy vigil.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE snow ceased, the wind subsided, and the morning of a new day commenced breaking over the colony with a clear sky, a few lingering stars, a cold but pure air.

With the first beams of the morning Philip opened his eyes, and saw Hester reclining in an easy-chair beside him, in a slumber full of beauty and peace, with her hand clasped in his.

"The dear little soul," he murmured, looking tenderly upon her. "Why did she not go to bed, as I told her? She must have found it tiresome to sleep in this manner?"

His voice, or the effect of his tender glances, had an instant influence upon the sensitive maiden, for she awoke from her sleep, and a smile of ineffable sweetness broke over her features, as her eyes encountered the loving gaze of Philip.

She aroused herself, but did not relinquish her hold of the hand she had been so long clasping.

"And you," she added—"how do you feel this morning?"

"Unusually well. I've never enjoyed before, it seems to me, a night of such repose—of such perfect rest. You have been with me continually?"

"Yes. I remained awake a long time, but your example was contagious. As all became silent around us and remained so, I knew that we had not been seen coming here, and that no harm could immediately come to us. A happy peace accordingly took possession of me, after all my agitations. I slept."

"I am glad you did. My only regret is that you did not go to bed. Your lonely watch must have fatigued you."

"On the contrary, it refreshed me. Your presence gave a profound repose to my whole being."

"Then I may regard myself as being of some value to you, my sweet darling!"

Their glances betrayed untold treasures of affection.

"How delightful it is to see you again!" exclaimed Philip, after a blissful silence. "The same that you were when I sailed, only more beautiful—as much girl and more woman, glorified with the graces and perfections that time, rightly employed, is constantly adding. Let me salute you again as my betrothed, as the better half of my being, as the better self to whom my thoughts, during all these months of absence, have been ceaselessly given!"

"You are unchanged, then—"

"Except for the better, except that my love is deeper and stronger. I love you still, and not that only: I love you with a new and riper love—a love that increases with every throb of my heart, and with every thought and act of my life. You are, and shall ever remain, the one perfect partner of my soul, the best and brightest treasure of all womanhood, the light and glory of all I am and have, the supreme mistress of all my possessions!"

A light full of tears, or tears radiant with light, made glorious the loveliness of the maiden, as she replied:

"I thank you, Philip. These assurances are more precious to me than words can tell you. No true woman ever doubts a true love—'twere a blasphemy to do so of which our sex is incapable: I have never for one moment had a doubt of yours—but neither can a woman who loves be told too often that her affection is fully reciprocated. The least of these assurances, in the trials of life, is as manna in the wilderness, or as dew to the parched flower: it gives new beauty to our pathway, new strength to our souls, new raptures to all our gladness!"

"And you love me the same as you did at my departure, or still better?"

"Still better and more. Not a day nor an hour have I seen since you left me, in which my whole being did not turn to you as the needle to the pole! As the stars unto their course, so is my soul to thine—so shall it be, for ever and for ever!"

A deep, calm joy illuminated the countenance of our hero, till it displayed that rare spiritual loveliness which only an eternal love can bestow.

"In my turn," said he, "let me thank you for the words you have just spoken—the love which inspires them—the great happiness they give me. I have not had the shadow of a doubt of the faithful heart I left behind me, seven months ago, but there is no music on earth equal to your voice when you say that you love me! Your happiness shall be the one object of my care and study. How have you passed the months of my absence?"

"Exactly as I should have passed the same period under your eyes—in preparing for our future, in trying to become wiser and better, in making myself more worthy of the love you bear me!"

"You have often been lonely?"

"Yes, in a certain sense, for I missed your society, your approval, your encouragement, the thousand blessings of your presence. But my loneliness in your absence has never degenerated into sadness. The simple truth is, Philip," and she raised her eyes and face all glowing and radiant to his own, "the joy I have known in being loved by you can never be destroyed by any of the accidents or circumstances of our earthly lot. You exist—you love me—and henceforth the whole world is filled by you, so completely that you are ever more with me!"

"Beautiful! glorious!" exclaimed Philip, whose admiration had deepened to a tender reverence.

"It was my duty to learn the conditions upon which a couple can make themselves happy, and next to do everything required of me by these conditions. From the moment when I agreed to become your wife, I became responsible for your happiness, and virtually engaged myself to assist you in obtaining and enjoying all the comforts and pleasures the world can give us!"

"And how shall I repay you for all this loving thought and care?" asked Philip, delighted at the

maiden's ideas of a home and of all the prospects she had thus placed before him.

"How repay me?" and she smiled. "By being happy, by making me so!"

"The task will be easy on my part," declared Philip, enthusiastically, "for you have pictured to me a sort of mundane paradise!"

"If so, it is one accessible to every couple in the world," rejoined Hester, "if they would only sit down and decide sensibly upon a plan of action, and then carry their plan into execution. The secret of human felicity is to form a proper conception of life, of our lot in the world, of our resources, of all the facts which tend either to our comfort or misery, and then to do the best we can with the means in our possession. In our case, Philip, I have not counted upon wealth, but only upon the modest savings already at your disposal, in addition to what my father and mother will do for us. It will not be difficult for us to buy some ground and build a small house, and I am sure that I can make that house a home for you, and one presenting all the happiness reasonably to be expected."

"I am sure of the truth of every word you utter," responded Philip. "You have not been dreaming all these months, but foreseeing—forming in your mind an ideal home, to be wrought into a bright and beautiful reality. I was hardly aware of the value of the little lady I was leaving behind me, when I sailed, was I?"

"Oh, you have not found out all my secrets yet, you may be sure," said Hester, with a merry sparkle in her eyes. "You have not yet imagined that I shall place at your disposal, for you are still a bachelor, you know, groping outside of my little paradise, and don't yet know one half of the wonderful things a wife who loves her husband can do for him. Why, as true as I live, Philip, you would be frightened and thunderstruck, and possibly look upon marriage as upon purgatory, if you knew, if you could comprehend at this moment the tremendous facility a wife has of making her husband miserable!"

"No; you don't mean it? Is it possible?"
"I tell you that a wife can be perfect thorn in her husband's side, if she please," pursued Hester. "She can think, for instance, that stewing, boiling, roasting, and frying, are beneath her dignity as a lady, and so leave her table to the care of an ignorant servant, who has about as much regard for the master of the house as for a pig in a sty. Or she can be entirely bound up in herself, with no thought of anything but her new dresses and bonnets, and have a word for her husband only when she wants money for her extravagances. Why, I could talk to you all day of the dreadful things a wife can do to her husband! How she can hand him over, bound hand and foot, to the care of hirelings; let his clothes run to ruin; be a leech in his purse, a useless and indolent consumer of his substance, and so on, till you would be shocked and terrified to hear me!"

"I have thought of these things," rejoined Philip, "and have often regretted that wives and husbands are not more fully and perfectly devoted to the art of extracting the sweets of life from one another. It is sad to see one-half of the households in Christendom discontented, or chafing under the mere husks and chaff of wedded life, when their houses might be such joyous homes, such temples of beauty and fidelity!"

"Sad? It is terrible! The world would be twice as full of happiness as it is at present, if everybody would consider the things implied in one beautiful word—home—and then do their best, every one in his own way, to carry those ideas and principles into execution. It is, perhaps, the sight of the wretched infelicities everywhere around us, that has set me to thinking of all these things, while you have been gone, and filled me with this resolve to make our home, Philip, the brightest and dearest place to you, to be found in the whole creation!"

"I know that it will be such!" replied Philip, with profound satisfaction. "And again I thank you, darling, for all this loving devotion to me—for these thoughtful measures for my comfort!"

"Your praise is precious, dear Philip! And I shall be supremely happy in carrying out the plans I have formed for your happiness. My thought of you will begin when I awake in the morning, and will cease only when sleep overtakes me at night. I shall feed you with all the nice things I have learned to prepare; shall make our home beautiful; shall share all your trials and vexations; shall lighten all your burdens; shall nurse you in sickness, and strive to execute all your wishes before you have time to speak them!"

"You charm me—you delight me beyond expression!" rejoined Philip. "I had no idea that a home could be so enchanting! What a charming little wife you will be to me! I long to be your husband! You are a good soul, Hester—"

"The very title I have prayed that you would give me!" exclaimed the maiden, with a flush of delight. "I have desired to be a soul in your house, Philip, and not a mere body; for a soul is something grand, something permanent, something to make home glorious! And when you add good to that great name, you bestow the grandest title that has yet been given to man or woman beneath the heavens!"

"A good soul you are, then!" declared Philip, solemnly; "and such shall henceforth be your name, as written upon my every thought and feeling. From this hour I live in you, and for you; to protect you from evil, to surround you with everything desirable, to take care of you constantly, to make you happy, to assist you up the great hills which lead away to the great life, to worship with you the benevolent Author of our being! From this hour, sweet Hester, my good soul!" and he enclosed her gently in his arms—"shall we not give ourselves to each other for time and eternity, and say now that we will henceforth be as one and the same being, for ever and for ever!"

The happy maiden did not reply in words. Her voice was lost in the joyous outgoings of her soul to that of her lover.

(To be continued.)

FACETIAE.

An overbearing barrister, endeavouring to browbeat a witness, told him he could plainly see a rogue in his face. "I never knew till now," said the witness, "that my face was a looking-glass."

A STUMP-SPEAKER exclaimed, "I know no North, no South, no East, no West, fellow-citizens!" "Then," exclaimed an old farmer in the crowd, "it's time you went to school and learnt your geography."

A FURRIER wishing to inform his customers that he recast their old furs into fashionable styles, wound up his advertisement as follows: "N. B.—Capes, victories, &c., made up for ladies in fashionable styles, out of their own skins."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

ONE of the most perfect illustrations of "sauce," in its popular sense, with which we are acquainted, is conveyed in the reply once given by a French curé to his bishop.

It is a regulation made by canonical law that a priest cannot keep a female servant to manage his household, unless she be of the assigned age of at least forty years. It once happened that a bishop dined with a curé, at whose house the prelate had arrived in the course of a visitation-tour. On that occasion he found that they were waited on at dinner by two quiet, pretty, female attendants, of some twenty years each.

When the diocesan and subordinate were once more alone, the former remarked on the uncanonical condition of his household, and asked the curé if he were not aware that by a rule of the church he could maintain but one *menagère*, who must have attained at least forty years. "I am quite aware of it, monsieur," said the rubicund curé; "but, you see, I prefer having my housekeeper in two volumes."

AN ANGLER'S PATIENCE.—A person, late one Saturday afternoon, hailed an elderly gentleman, as he was skilfully essaying the wily fisherman's art for trout with "Hallo, there! Got anything?" "Got anything? Of course not; I only came here last Wednesday!" was the reply, as the patient angler once more cast his patent fly.

A PARIS correspondent says he has just overheard a prayer at Notre Dame. "Oh, beloved Saint Joseph," murmured a rosy little grisette, on her knees before a flaming taper she had just lighted in his honour, "grant me a good husband, plenty of ironing to do, shirt collars without starch, and charcoal without smoke; and to my dear old aunt an easy death. All these blessings as speedily as may be!"

AN ASPIRATION.—"Sally, I've got a sweetheart—such a nice young man! He's in a profession!" "Oh, Jemima! don't use such wicked words." "It ain't a wicked word at all, Sally, it's a business." "Business, Jemima, what business?" "Guess what it is. It begins with ho." "I know, Jemima, it's a hofficer." "No, it ain't, though; it's something much better than a hosier." "Then it's a hocktioneer—that's it, Jemima!" "Oh, you hateful thing, to think of anything so vulgar! He's a horange merchant."

SOZON students returning from a theatre, came across, about one o'clock in the morning, a man lying in the street dead drunk. Quick as thought they put him in a cab, "tonsured" him, clothed him in a monk's white robe, passed a chaplet round his neck, and put sandals on his feet. They then conducted him to the monastery in Rue d'Enfer, and gave him

in charge to the porter, who warmly thanked the young men, and closing the door, placed his "brother" in a cell. It was supposed he had travelled from Marseilles. In the morning, when he opened his eyes, he found he was the subject of an oration from one of the monks. When he could speak, he asked some one to go to a certain street, and see if a chestnut seller was not there, because he knew no more now what he was. The good brothers found they had been victimised by some practical jokers, and, having put the chestnut seller into lay clothes, set him at liberty.

THE HASTINGS MILKMAN.

Jinks, the Hastings milkman, one morning forgot to water his milk. In the hall of the customer in his round, the sad omission flashed upon Jinks's wounded feelings. A large tub of fine clear water stood on the floor by his side, no eye was upon him, and thrice did Jinks dilute his milk with a large measure filled from the tub, before the maid brought up the jugs. Jinks served her, and went on. While he was bellowing down the next aisle, his first customer's footman beckoned to him from the door. Jinks returned, and was immediately ushered into the library. There sat my lord, who had just tasted the milk.

"Jinks," said his lordship.

"My lord!" replied Jinks.

"Jinks," continued his lordship, "I should feel particularly obliged if you would henceforth bring me the milk and water separately, and allow me the favour of mixing them myself."

"Well, my lord, it's useless to deny the thing, for I suppose your lordship watched me while—"

"No," interrupted the nobleman, "the fact is, that my children bathe at home, Jinks, and the tub in the hall was full of sea water, Jinks."

The following story was told by Dr. William Arnott, at a *soirée* in the Rev. Sir H. W. Moncrieff's church in Edinburgh the other evening:—"Rev. Macleod and Dr. Watson were in the West Highlands together on a tour ere leaving for India. While crossing a loch in a boat, in company with a number of other passengers, a storm came on. One of the passengers was heard to say, 'that the two ministers should begin an' pray, or we'll a' be drowned.' 'Na, na,' said the boatmen, 'the little an can pray if he likes, but the big ane maun tak' an oar.'"

SCIENCE GOSSIP.

The proper thing to use with gun-cotton is shot silk.

The Cuckoo has been heard on Bethnal-Green, and the Nightingale has commenced singing in Short's Gardens. The Swallows have returned to the Mansion House.

A patent has been taken out for manufacturing pens with cocoa-nibs.

Ladies will be pleased to hear that a process has been discovered by which they can electro-plait their hair.

Many persons have burnt their fingers by dabbling in Petroleum.

A Scientific Ghost-story will shortly appear in fortnightly numbers, founded on Spectrum Analysis.—Punch.

SELF-CONTEMPTUOUS EXPRESSIONS.—A gentleman has put an advertisement in the *Times*, announcing that, in accordance with a wish expressed in a will, he has assumed the name of Pugh in addition to his surname, one of his Christian names being Pugh already. By thus adding Pugh to Pugh, he may almost be said to have pug-pughed himself.—Punch.

ANOTHER NAPIER!!

General Punch: "Sir Robert Napier, Your Royal Highness—who has freed the captives! settled Theodore! and conquered Abyssinia!"

Commander-in-Chief: "Napier?—Robert Napier? Nothing to do with us. Knew Charles and William, though—troublesome fellows! and Abyssinia! pooh! bounce sir—bounce! don't believe in victories we've had nothing to do with; but if you say it's all right—"—Punch.

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

Mrs. Thistlewaite (from the North, but who does not consider herself at all provincial): "I'll come, I wish to drive to Westbourne Terrace. Ah! now which is the nearest way!—Do I—"

Policeman: "Very sorry, mum, but I'm a stranger here in London, mum—only just come up from the country, same as you, mum!?"—Punch.

THE BEVERAGE.—Nobody beneath the rank of a viscount, say the newspapers, was admitted to the honour of a place in St. Patrick's Hall, at the banquet after the Installation of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. And yet, H.R.H., in a very gracious reply to the speech of the Lord Lieutenant, who had pro-

posed the at all times and in all places popular toast, "The Health of the Prince and Princess of Wales," remarked that the restoration of the magnificent cathedral in which he, the Prince, had just received the insignia of the Order instituted by his great-grandfather, George III., was an act of munificence on the part of a private gentleman of Ireland, "whose name," said H.R.H., "is so well-known that I need not mention it to you, more particularly as I have the pleasure of seeing him at the table." From this it is plain that Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness has been raised from the rank of a Baronet to that of a Viscount at the very least. Greater marks of Royal favour have been conferred on less deserving persons, etc. now.—*Fun.*

AN OFFICIAL CAT.

We clip the following from a report of a Pier and Harbour Board Meeting in Southampton:

"Mr. Deal wished to know what were the duties of a person named Naylor. Mr. Keane (the collector of harbour dues) said that Naylor's duties, whose father held the post before him, were to clean out his (Mr. Keane's) office, and to take care of a large cat, which was the terror of all the rats and mice in the neighbourhood. Mr. Sharpe asked how much did he receive for the cat? (Laughter.) Mr. Keane said that Naylor received 4*s.* a-week from the Commissioners, and 3*d.* a-week for the cat. (Laughter.) Mr. Deal said that one of the cranes on the quay required to be oiled, and his asked Naylor to do it, when he said it was not his business. Mr. Sharpe: His business was to oil the cat. (Laughter.)"

What a parable of officialism! Here we have a cat allowed 3*d.* a-week to do the work, and a man allowed 4*s.* a-week to look after the cat—kept, in fact, for the purr-puss. It's almost like a Government office.—*Fun.*

LATEST FROM ABYSSINIA.—A correspondent informs us that during the whole campaign he has not met with a single specimen of the much-talked-of "pink-headed fly." Our correspondent adds, however, that he has lately seen several thousands of the "woolly-headed fly."—*Fun.*

MAIN-LACAL LANGUAGE.—A country paper describing a recent inundation stated that—"The foot-bridge at Main was carried down the stream and landed in the sea." The only way in which we can account for the bridge being landed in the sea is by supposing that the land called Main is the ocean, and that the sea is the Main-land in those parts.—*Fun.*

COMPARISONS ARE ODIOUS.

Romantic Dear: "Oh, Frederick! Is it not delightful to wander in the quiet country and listen to the cuckoo's note?"

Frederick (who has no soul for poetry): "Oh—ah—yes! I dare say it's all right, only it always reminds me of hiccupps!"—*Fun.*

WONDERS WILL NEVER CHASE.—That some portions of our coast are slowly but surely receding by reason of the encroachments of the sea is a well-known fact; but we were not prepared to hear from a friend, who has a villa on the banks of the Thames, that, looking out of window one morning, he found the whole of his lawn "sloping" to the river.—*Fun.*

EPIGRAPH ON THEODORE.—He sleeps at last who never took a Nap-here.—*Tomahawk.*

THE CURRENT QUESTION.—Why is Mr. Disraeli's policy like Gounod's *Faust*?

(Prize: A Free Ticket of Admission (not transferable) to the Louvre Arcade.)—*Tomahawk.*

It is said (we believe Mr. Home says so) that the great Spiritualist, whatever that may be, has been attacked in the street. Mr. Home has been pricked in the hand. We thought it could not be in his conscience.—*Tomahawk.*

VERY LIKELY!

The praiseworthy determination of Lord Russell to be at the head of every important movement, however prejudicial to his own interests or contrary to his principles, will probably in the Republican future lead to something like this:

APRIL 2, 1870.—A large meeting was held yesterday in Westminster Hall, for the purpose of supporting the bill introduced into the House of Commons by the Right Hon. John Bright for abolishing the House of Lords. Earl Russell presided.

The Noble Chairman rose amid loud cheers. He said that he was proud and delighted to see so vast a meeting assembled together in support of a measure which he had always advocated. Though belonging himself to an aristocratic house, he had always been a "friend of the people." If he had been anything else, perhaps the world would never have inscribed among its famous men the younger son of the Duke of Bedford. (Cheers.) He had always disliked the House of Peers. It was much

against his wish that he had ever been made a belted earl; and as for his son, he need hardly say how odious the idea of any title, but that of Nature's nobleman, was to that exemplary young tribune. (Loud cheers.) He thought Lord Amherst had ever done his best to bring ridicule and contempt on that order to which he had the misfortune to belong. (Cheers.) As for himself, he could never hope to describe in sufficiently strong terms the humiliation which he felt when elevated to the Peerage. He felt it was robbing the Lower House of something more than prestige, or honour, or eloquence. It was like shutting out the light of the sun. (Hear, hear.) He could not do anything in the House of Lords but tease Lord Derby, and that was poor sport for such an intellectual giant as himself. (Cheers.) Then there was nobody to listen to him in the Upper House when he did think fit to speak, except the Woolsack and the Reporters, and a drowsy Law Lord or two. It was throwing pearls before swine. (Laughter and cheers.) Then the robes were so ridiculous. Such beauty as his—he spoke with all humility and modesty—was "when unadorned adorned the most." (Loud cheers.) The Father of Reform needed no gorgeous livery to add splendour to his appearance. (Hear, hear.) After speaking with similar modesty and good sense for about an hour and a half, the noble Earl concluded by proposing the first resolution, "That the House of Peers be abolished."—*Tomahawk.*

WAITING.

He said that he would come to-day,—
To-day, and not to-morrow!
Before the day had died away
And night wept dews of sorrow!
The flowers have closed their silken leaves,
No bee late-wandering hummeth,
Hushed are the swallows 'neath the eaves,
And still no footfall cometh!
He said that he would come to-day,—
To-day, and not to-morrow!
Before the day had died away
And night wept tears of sorrow!
From rippling brook, and leaflet dead,
My list'ning fancies borrow
False echoes of coming tread,
Whose step would chase my sorrow.
The rooks caw in the far-off trees,
The kite creep home together,
Their sweet bells chiming in the breeze,
And yet, he comes not hither!
He said that he would come to-day,—
To-day, and not to-morrow!
Before the day had died away
And night wept dews of sorrow!

J. J. L.

GEMS.

VIRTUE is not more exempt than vice from the ills of fate, but contains within itself always an energy to resist them, sometimes an anodyne to soothe.

HOWEVER many friends you have, do not neglect yourself; though you have a thousand, not one of them loves you so much as you ought to love yourself.

INTEGRITY is the foundation of all that is high in character among mankind; other qualities may add to its splendour, but if this essential requisite be wanting, all their lustre fades.

HAVE courage enough to review your own conduct; to condemn it where you detect faults, to amend it to the best of your ability; to make good resolves for your future guidance, and to keep them.

IN any society, when a difference of opinion arises on matters of little or no consequence, it is wise to give in, although you may have incontestable proofs to support the correctness of your opinion—this flatters the other's vanity, and cannot injure yourself.

CHANGE OF AIR IN DISEASE.—Here is a little observation from the naturalist's point of view, which may not be uninteresting to those who are in the habit of recommending their patients a change of residence, because it serves to indicate that in doing so they are acting in conformity with a natural law affecting organic life. Mr. Darwin, in speaking of the advantages and disadvantages of changed conditions of life, dwells upon the good derived from slight changes. No two individuals, he says, and still less any two varieties, are absolutely alike in constitution and structure. Everyone must have observed the remarkable influence on convalescents of a change of residence, and no medical man doubts

the truth of this fact. Small farmers, who hold but little land, are convinced that their cattle derive great benefit from a change of pasture. In the case of plants, the evidence is strong that a great advantage is gained by removing seeds, tubers, bulbs, and cuttings from one soil or place to another as different as possible.

STATISTICS.

As a result of the reduction of the tariff upon telegrams in Switzerland to a uniform charge of half a franc (ten cents) a message, in January, 1867, the number of dispatches throughout the country was 50,518, against 86,461 for the same period in the present year; and in January, 1867, the receipts were about 11,900 dollars, against 18,060 dollars during the same period this year.

POST-OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.—The balance due to depositors in the Post-Office Savings Banks, at the close of the year 1867, was no less than 9,749,929*l.*, an increase of 1,628,755*l.*, over the amount at the end of 1866. The assets showed a surplus of 143,910*l.* over the liabilities, 4,643,906*l.* was received from depositors in the year 1867, and 8,222,800*l.* was paid to depositors; the addition of the interest due to depositors raises the year's increase to the amount above stated. 850,996 accounts remained open at the end of the year. The total number of transactions from the establishment of the Post-Office Savings Banks in September, 1861, to the end of 1867 has been 9,120,390—viz., 7,013,748 deposits and 2,106,642 withdrawals, and the average cost of each transaction has been, substantially, the cost originally estimated—viz., 7*d.*, the precise average being 7*066d.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

AN attempt is about to be made to grow tea in Jamaica, for which the climate and soil are said to be well adapted.

THERE are two firms at Geneva engaged in the manufacture of musical birds, and producing not more than 100 a year.

THE new pearl fishery of Western Australia is profitably employing a large number of vessels, and procuring pearls of the finest character.

A NATIONAL calamity has taken place in one of the French provinces. A girl has been born with two tongues.

THE Church Missionary Society have presented a memorial to the Queen praying for more effectual steps to suppress the slave trade on the east coast of Africa. The number of slaves brought to Zanzibar is annually about 30,000.

THE Horse Shoe Cloisters, at the west-end of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, have been inspected by Mr. Gilbert Scott, the architect, with a view to their restoration. A new flight of steps is to replace that which has so long disfigured the principal entrance beneath the beautiful stained glass window at the west end of St. George's Chapel.

THE Queen has been graciously pleased to give orders for the appointment of Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B., G.C.S.I., commanding her Majesty's Forces in Abyssinia, to be an Ordinary member of the Military Division of the First Class, or Knight Grand Cross, of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.

LARGE amounts of Mexican copper coins have been sent to San Francisco to be melted. Formerly each of the Mexican States was permitted to strike its own copper coin, denominated "taicos," and their values differed so greatly as to cause considerable annoyance and loss. The Government of that country has abolished the use of all copper money, the great bulk of which will probably find its way to California, to be converted to other uses.

GREEN GLASS FOR PLANT GROWTH.—"Descending to the large kitchen-garden in the vale beneath Belvoir Castle, we saw a large span-pit full of greenhouse plants, including azaleas, epacris, and such like, and which had all the glass shaded green, by being washed inside with what painters call green distemper powder mixed with butter-milk, except two sashes. The plants, when placed in this pit some months before to make their summer growths, were all in the same general state as to health and vigour. They got the same treatment as to water, ventilation, &c., the only difference being that those in the two lights referred to were under the clear glass, the others under that which was shaded green: and had we not seen the plants with our own eyes, we could not have believed that there could have been such a difference in their health, growth, and general appearance, and all in favour of those under the green glass."—W. T. D.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. WHITTAKER.—The parcel has failed to reach our office.

WILLIAM TRAIL.—We do not supply other publications; apply to a news-vendor.

R. M.—*Sic* is a Latin word, and when used after an error, it signifies so written or printed in the original.

FLORENCE GERTHURDE.—Twenty-six numbers form a volume; at the completion of each we publish also an Index.

C. T. KNOWLSON.—The same as rabbit skins, for which we have a recipe in No. 248 of THE LONDON READER.

IGNORANCE.—Apply by letter, enclosing testimonials as to character, to any shipowner. Writing very good.

ANNIE AND KATE.—The novel you name was written by Mrs. Gaskell, and was published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, Piccadilly.

G. R. D. S.—Apply to a shipowner. There are advertisements daily in the morning newspapers for apprentices and midshipmen.

R. BLADEFIELD.—From your description we should take the coin to be a halfpenny; but why not show it to a coin dealer, who from inspection, would at once tell you?

H. H. S. P.—We know nothing against the gentleman you name. Nevertheless, if you take our advice, you will avoid him and consult a regular medical practitioner.

HELLICE.—The so-called defects of which you complain are generally deemed charms by young ladies. They arise from no other cause but a freak of nature.

C. D. P.—In the event of a separation the sum allowed to the wife would entirely depend upon the amount of the husband's income. 2. The husband.

JOHN NORMAL.—Should the scalp be obstinately dry and harsh, it may be safely washed with a cold weak solution of green tea, or with spirits of Castile soap, containing a few grains of tannin.

A POOR WIDOW.—You can legally recover. Place the matter in the hands of a solicitor; if you permit the six years to pass without suing, you will have no remedy at law.

JENNIE.—Broken glass may be repaired by dissolving some linseed oil in gin, just sufficient to cover it. Make the broken parts quite warm, dip them into the liquid, and tie them together for a short time.

P. P.—1. Your parents having left you of their own free will, and so relinquished the income you allowed them, they have no remedy. 2. The parochial authorities have a claim upon you, but if the case be fairly represented to them we believe they would compel your relatives to return.

BLACKSTONE.—To qualify yourself for an articled clerk to an attorney, you need only pass a usual school examination. Before, however, being admitted as an attorney you must pass a severe legal examination, the nature and extent of which you will learn from the gentleman to whom you are articled.

G. H. C.—Brunswick black for varnishing iron is made by melting one lb. of common asphaltum in an iron saucepan, with half a pint of linseed oil, and one quart of turpentine added to the asphaltum when it is in a liquid state; when the mixture is cold it may be applied to the iron with an ordinary paint-brush.

ELIZABETH A. G.—1. TO MAKE JAM, the fruit must be gathered on a dry day, weigh it, and to every pound of fruit allow three-quarters of a pound of loaf-sugar, put it into a preserving pan and boil for about three-quarters of an hour, remove the scum carefully as it rises, put the jam into pots, and when cold, cover with oiled papers; over these put a piece of tissue-paper braised over on both sides with the white of an egg; when dry, the covering will be quite hard and air-tight. 2. TO MAKE JELLY, put the fruit into a jar and place it in a sauceron of boiling water over the fire, and let it simmer gently until the juice is well drawn from the fruit, then strain through a jelly-bag; do not squeeze too much, or the pulp from the fruit will be pressed through with the juice. Measure, and to each pint allow three-quarters of a pound of loaf-sugar, put it into a preserving-pan, set it over the fire, and keep stirring the jelly until it is done; use a wooden spoon, as metal spoils the colour. When it has boiled half an hour, put a little on a plate, and if firm when cool, it is done. Put it into pots, and proceed in the same way for jam. 3. TO MAKE MIXED PICKLES. As the different vegetables come into season have them gathered on a dry day, and, after wiping them with a cloth, to free them from moisture, put them into the pickle, which is made in the following way.—To each gallon of vinegar allow a quarter of a pound of bruised ginger, the same of mustard and salt, two oz. of mustard-seed, one and a half oz. of turmeric, one oz. of ground black pepper, and a quarter of an oz. of cayenne. Put the mustard, turmeric,

pepper, and cayenne into a basin with a little of the vinegar, and stir until no lumps remain, then add with the other ingredients to the rest of the vinegar. Keep this liquor in a warm place, and stir every morning for a month with a wooden spoon; then add the vegetables, which should consist of cauliflower, onions, celery, sliced cucumbers, gherkins, French beans, nasturtiums, and capiaconas. The cauliflower must be divided into small bunches; the jars should have tightly-fitting lids, and be tied over with bladders. The liquor should be made in May or June, to be ready as the season arrives for the various vegetables.

FOR PUFF PASTRY.—To every pound of flour allow eight oz. of butter and three oz. of lard; mix the flour to a smooth paste with half a pint of water, roll it out three times, the first time covering it with butter, dredge with a little flour, the second with lard, and the third with butter, dredging each time; brushing it when rolled out with the white of an egg, assist it to rise in leaves or flakes.

LEX-CHESTER.—1. If the case be literally as you state it, your employer must indeed be a shabby fellow. At the same time, keep in mind the wholesome maxim which teaches the folly of throwing dirty water away until you can get clean. 2. Your salary ought to be between 2*£*s. and 3*£*s. per week. Why not advertise in one of the Manchester or London daily papers?

MAUL.—1. We cannot advise the use of quack medicines. Surely your employers would allow you sufficient time to consult a hospital surgeon or physician. In the meantime avoid all salt food. 2. To whiten the skin, take of Castile soap, one lb.; water, one gallon; dissolve, then add alcohol one quart; oil of rosemary and oil of lavender, each two drachms; mix well.

ALICE ALLMARE.—1. To cure ox-tongues, put in a tub five lbs. of salt, three oz. of saltpetre, half a lb. of brown sugar, rub them well with this mixture three or four times, and let them remain in it for a week. 2. To boil tongues, put them into a stewpan, with plenty of cold water, and a bunch of savoury herbs, let it gradually come to a boiling point, then skim, and simmer very gently, until tender—when done, peel off the skin.

ASHLEY.—*Shah* is a Persian word for prince or king. It is the general title of the supreme ruler in Persia, Afghanistan, and other countries of Southern and Central Asia. The sovereign, however, may, and frequently does, decline the title, assuming in its place that of *Khan*, an inferior and more common appellation. The same title can also be assumed by any of the Shah's sons, and upon all the princes of the blood the cognomen *Shah-zadeh* is bestowed.

A WHITE SAIL.

A white sail shining in the mist,
A lonely bark in the blue bay;
What has she left in her own land,
What seeks she now, so far away?

The sparkling waves, the whistling wind,
The mast that sways and creaks;

Alas! it is not grief she feels,
Nor is it joy she seeks.

O'er her the golden sunlight streams,
Her path is azure, bright, and free,

Unsatisfied, she longs for storm,
As if in storm should comfort be!

E. D. C.

AN OFFICER'S DAUGHTER.—1. To preserve flowers through the winter, pluck them when half blown, and put them in a close-covered earthen vessel, dipping them with the stalks downwards in equal quantities of verjuice and water, mixed, sprinkled with a small portion of bay salt. The vessel must be kept closed in a warm place; and, on the coldest day in winter, if the flowers be taken out, washed in pure water and held before a gentle fire, they will open as if in their usual bloom. 2. To remove black spots from the face, bathe the skin well in a little solution of common soda. An application of weakly diluted spirits of wine is also efficacious.

STANHOPE.—Barcarolle is a term applied to certain songs composed by the Venetian gondoliers, and sung by them in their boats. The style of these airs is simple and natural, like the manners of the people who compose them and they possess a kind of artless beauty which not only strikes ordinary ears, but delights even the *virtuosi*. The Venetian gondoliers have the liberty of visiting all the theatres gratis, which gives them an opportunity of cultivating their ears and taste without expense. The gondolier songs are so graceful and pleasing, that the musicians of Italy pride themselves on knowing and singing them.

MELINDA.—There are without doubt many people in the world who imagine that any indulgence in an affectionate feeling is a weakness. How often do we meet those who will return from a journey, and only greet their families with a distant dignity, and move among their children with the cold and lofty splendour of an iceberg. There is scarcely a more unnatural sight than such a family. Who, that has ever experienced the joys of friendship, kindly sympathy, and affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery, than be robbed of the hidden treasures of the heart? Cherish, then, your heart's best affections, indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, parental, and fraternal love.

J. G.—The last generalissimo of the republic of Poland, and one of the noblest characters of his age, was Thaddeus Kosciusko; he was born in 1752, of a distinguished family of Lithuania, and was very early in life made a captain in the Polish service; in 1782, he was made major-general, and when the revolution broke out in Poland, at the beginning of 1794, Kosciusko was placed at the head of the national forces; after various conflicts with the Russians, under Suvarow, the Poles were defeated at the battle of Macziewice. Kosciusko was wounded and taken prisoner, but was soon afterwards released by the Emperor Paul: with Kosciusko's defeat, the independence of Poland was annihilated. He died at Solene, in Switzerland, in 1817.

J. MILLER.—It is said that the largest spiders in the world are found in the Bermudas; they are remarkable for their extraordinary size, and the strength of their webs; their bodies consist of two parts, one flat and the other round; both together, with the legs stretched out, are large enough to cover a man's hand. The round part of their body is shaped much like a pigeon's egg, and under the flat part their legs grow, five on each side, with four joints and claws at the end; they have a small hole in their backs, and their

mouths are covered with grayish hairs, intermixed with red, and a crooked tooth on each side, of a hard polished substance, and of a bright shining black; so that they are often set in gold or silver, to serve for toothpicks. They show a wonderful skill and agility in spreading their webs from tree to tree, and they are so large and strong as to extend seven or eight fathoms; and when finished will ensnare a bird as large as a thrush.

SPENCER.—A spear is a lance, or long weapon with a sharp point, formerly used as a manual or missile weapon. The invention of the spear has been ascribed to the Etruscans; that of the Greeks was generally made of ash, with a leaf-shaped head of metal and a pointed ferrule at the butt, with which it was fixed in the ground, a method used, according to Homer, when the troops rested on their arms or slept upon their shields. The Romans, before they understood sculpture, worshipped Mars under the form of a spear, a custom derived from the Sabines, among whom the spear was a symbol of war. The cross spear-heads of the Britons were all pyramidal, narrowing at the base. The heads of the Anglo-Saxon spears were exceedingly long, and sometimes fearfully barbed.

O. O. S., twenty-four, and dark; wages 30*s.* per week.

KATE, eighteen, medium height, dark eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, and respectable.

IDA, fair, blue eyes, and has a good income. Respondent must be tall.

LILY, sixteen, medium height, golden hair, blue eyes, pretty, and fond of music. Respondent must be tall, dark, and good looking.

EMMA AND LOTTE. "Emma," tall, auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fair complexion. "Lotte," medium height, brown hair and eyes. Respondents must be tall and dark.

EUGENIE AND AUGUSTINE. "Eugenie," nineteen, "Augustine," twenty, with 80*s.* a year each. Respondents must be in business.

ELLEN J., twenty-four, not tall, dark, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be a tradesman or a respectable mechanic, tall, fair, good tempered, and steady.

J. D. S., twenty-eight, gentlemanly, and holding a good position in the Civil Service. Respondent must have an affectionate disposition.

HAWTHORN, seventeen, a tradesman's son, and handsome. Respondent must be pretty and affectionate, a tradesman's daughter preferred.

RALPH, nineteen, a tradesman, gray eyes, and brown hair. Respondent must be about seventeen; a tradesman's daughter preferred.

ROBERT WILLIAMS, twenty-two, 5 ft. 7 in., dark hair, blue eyes, fair, and in good circumstances. Respondent must be about nineteen, have light hair, good looking, and with a small income.

ALBERT FULLER, twenty-one, 5 ft. 9 in., fair hair, handsome, and in a good business. Respondent must have dark hair, a fair complexion, be about nineteen, and with a small income.

FLORENCE D. and ISABEL B. "Florence," seventeen, tall, dark hair, and hazel eyes. "Isabel," seventeen, rasher, fair, and very pretty. Respondents must be tall and dark officers in the Army or Navy preferred.

ANNIE AND KATE. "Annie," twenty-four, 5 ft. 5 in., brown hair, and lightblue eyes. Respondent must be a mechanic, about thirty, and dark. "Kate," seventeen, brown wavy hair, and dark blue eyes. Respondent must be fair, and about twenty.

ROSE AND LILY. "Rose," seventeen, tall and slight, brown hair and eyes, cheerful disposition, and will have a little money when of age. "Lily," sixteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and good looking. Respondents must be dark, good looking, and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

WINIFRED is responded to by—"Rose," twenty-six, medium height, black hair and eyes, lively, and thoroughly domesticated.

HARVEY H. by—"Lizzie," nineteen, 5 ft. 3 in., fair, auburn hair, and hazel eyes; and—"Florence Heartsease," eighteen, and with 2*£*s. a year.

WALTER H. by—"L. R." eighteen, pretty, good tempered, thoroughly domesticated, and well educated.

C. NIMMOH by—"May," twenty-one, medium height, brown hair and eyes, and thoroughly domesticated.

Z. Z. Z. by—"L. Robinson," a widow, respectable, and well connected, lively, a good housekeeper, very fond of home, has a small income, and a house of furniture.

CHARLIE BY—"Angus," twenty, medium height, dark blue eyes, dark hair, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated.

EDITH MAY by—"C. M. L." twenty-four, 5 ft. 6*1/2* in., and dark.

NELLY G. by—"G. W." twenty-seven, handsome, and in receipt of 20*s.* per annum.

VIOLET BY—"Willie," thirty-four, 5 ft. 4 in., a mechanic, dark, affectionate, and very respectable.

ELIZA BY—"W. B."

EMMA BY—"W. E. B." tall, rather dark, has a fortune, and a good business.

ELIZA (a widow) by—"Dick," forty-five, a widower, a tradesman, earning two pounds per week.

FANNY H. BY—"A. D. S." twenty-eight, medium height, fair, has an excellent business, and a good income.

LUCY P. BY—"Jack," twenty-four, 5 ft. 6 in., brown hair, and hazel eyes; a petty officer in the Royal Navy.

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